

August - 25 Cents

SMART SET

*True Stories
from
Real Life*

779

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"I'll pay your RAILROAD FARE

to the large,
wonderfully-
equipped-
**COYNE
SHOPS"**



H. C. LEWIS
President
Coyne Electrical
School

This Ticket good for
One Continuous Passage
from ANY PLACE in the
UNITED STATES to
CHICAGO
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Remember, there
is no substitute
for practical,
personal training!



ELECTRICITY

**Pays \$60 to \$200 a Week
to Coyne-Trained Men**



NO line of work on this great big Earth of ours is so fascinating—so **THRILLING**—as electrical work. Just think how closely related is Electricity to every great achievement of modern times—the radio, that does away with both time and distance and carries knowledge and entertainment to even the farthest lands; the globe-encircling airplane that depends upon its electrical motors to escape the dangers of sky, land and sea; the telegraph, which safeguards trains and speeds our communications; the giant ship at sea, and the lighthouse which stands sentinel through the long night; the street car, the automobile, the industrial plant, the motion picture, the farm and the home. And millions of other activities and achievements of mankind depend upon Electricity, that mysterious force which is unlike any other power on Earth—that wonderful thing which has lightened mankind's burdens and advanced civilization many centuries in a few short years.

Complete Electrical Training in Twelve Weeks

I have perfected an unusual course of instruction in Electricity, a course that is absolutely thorough, that is easy to master, that covers every single phase and factor of the subject, that fits you for the **BIG** electrical jobs—the **HIGH-SALARIED** thrilling jobs.

Three Months from Now You Can Be an Electrical Expert

I mean every word I say. I stake my reputation and the reputation of my world-famous **COYNE** School on my statements to you. Your success means my success! I have already started **THOUSANDS** of men, young and old, on the road to permanent success and prosperity; have guided them to true happiness and independence. I have plenty of evidence to back up my claims—thousands of letters from men who never knew what it was to earn more than a few dollars per week or month until they took my splendid course in Electricity.

You Don't Need Education or Experience

My course is not something that you merely study from books and letters. It is a practical **LEARN-BY-DOING** course. Every student receives individual and personal instruction in the great **COYNE** Shops in Chicago. Here you will find thousands of dollars worth of electrical apparatus, every bit modern and all installed for your use and instruction. Along with my shop training, you visit the great industrial organizations and power plants in this unparalleled electrical center. You learn *everything* about Electricity by taking my course at **COYNE**. That's the only way to be an Electrical Expert—a real one, a thorough one, one able to be a **BIG BOSS** and to command a **BIG SALARY**. And you can learn in *twelve interesting weeks* at **COYNE**, regardless of your education, knowledge of mathematics, or previous experience.

Earn While You Learn

My Employment Department helps you to get a job to earn a good part of your expenses and assists you to a good job on graduation.

Send Coupon NOW for My Big, New FREE Book

and Special Offer of **FREE COURSES** in Radio and Auto, Truck and Tractor Electricity

Right now I am making the greatest offer ever made by a Practical Training Institution. Even if you are not planning on coming right now don't delay a single minute. Send coupon right away for full details. No obligation at all. Remember Coyne is a School with an established reputation. Endorsed by Electrical Industry. Backed by over a *Quarter of a Century of Success*. You owe it to yourself to investigate. Act **NOW**!

FREE RAILROAD FARE

to Chicago, the Wonderful Resort City and
Greatest Electrical Center in the World

Make this the most profitable and enjoyable time of your life. Be sure to write at once regarding my special offer of **FREE RAILROAD FARE** to Chicago from any point in the United States.

Master Electricity right in the Electrical Center of the World. You see everything Electrical here. Along with my Shop Training you visit the big organizations and power plants—you see the greatest electrical plants in the world.

GREAT RESORT CITY

Chicago, on beautiful Lake Michigan, is the Nation's Summer and Autumn Playground. Free Bathing Beaches, Beautiful Parks, Excursion Boats and the great Municipal Pier, Zoos, Bull Parks. The daylight saving plan makes it possible for you to enjoy all this, and still have plenty of time for your electrical education.

Tune In Coyne Radio Station

Tune in tonight or any night on our own Radio Broadcasting Station, **WGES** (World's Greatest Electrical School), Formerly **WTAY**. Wave length 250 meters. Always an interesting program.

COYNE

ELECTRICAL SCHOOL

H. C. LEWIS, President Established 1899
Dept C-615 1300-10 W. Harrison St., Chicago

SUCCESS COUPON

H. C. LEWIS, President
COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL
1300-10 W. Harrison Street
Dept. C-615, Chicago, Illinois

Dear H. C.—I sure want one of those big handsome 12x15 books, with 151 actual photographs printed in two colors. Send it quick. I'll be looking for it on the next mail. I want the facts without placing me under any obligation. Be sure and tell me all about the *Free Railroad Fare* and *Two Free Courses*.

Name _____

Address _____

Not a Correspondence Course; All Practical, Personal Training!



A frankly written book which every mother will want to show her daughter

WHAT is more difficult for a mother than the instruction of her daughter in the facts about feminine hygiene? No matter how scientific and up-to-date her own information may be, it is hard to know just where to begin, and *how*. This little book solves the problem for mother, daughter or wife. It carries a clear and sensible message for every woman who values her health and peace of mind.

In this age of wholesome frankness there are still far too many women who stumble along unguided. Some have absolutely nobody to tell them what they should know. Some have received wrong or incomplete advice. Others are simply too shy or timid to ask.

The result is that thousands of women today are running untold risks through the use of poisonous, caustic antiseptics. A shameful condition, but physicians and nurses will vouch for the truth of this statement.

It is unnecessary to run these risks

Happily, science has now come to the aid of woman in her natural desire to achieve a complete surgical cleanliness *and to do it safely*. She can now throw out all such deadly poisons from the home and install in their place the great, new antiseptic called Zonite. Though absolutely non-

poisonous and non-caustic, Zonite is actually far more powerful than any dilution of carbolic acid that can be safely applied to the human body, and *more than forty times* as strong as peroxide of hydrogen. These comparisons give some idea of the standing of Zonite as a genuine germicide. How different in its nature is Zonite from the compounds containing carbolic acid and bichloride of mercury! These fluids, even when greatly diluted, remain so caustic in their action that they can not, for instance, be held in the mouth without sharply corroding and withering the delicate tissue-lining. Zonite, on the contrary, is non-poisonous and so absolutely safe that dental authorities are actually recommending it widely for use in the practice of oral hygiene.

The clean wholesomeness of Zonite

Enlightened women of refinement everywhere have been the first to see the change that Zonite has brought into their lives. While knowing the importance of personal hygiene to their lasting health and happiness, they have

in the past shrunk from the use of poisonous antiseptics. Now they have Zonite. And Zonite, clean and wholesome as an ocean breeze, is an assurance of a continued period of daintiness, charm and freedom from worry.

The Women's Division offers this booklet free

The Women's Division has prepared this dainty booklet especially for the use and convenience of women. The information it contains is concise and to the point. A delicate subject is treated with scientific frankness, as it should be. Send for it. Read it. Then you can properly consider your-

self abreast of the times in a very important matter of health and comfort. Pass this booklet on to others who need it. Use the coupon below. Zonite Products Co., Postum Building, 250 Park Ave., New York, N. Y. In Canada: 165 Dufferin St., Toronto.

Summer Uses for Zonite

For cuts, wounds, burns, scratches incidental to camp and beach life.

For insect bites, likely to become infected when scratched, especially in the case of children.

For poison ivy and other poisons of the woods.

For sunburn, another source of infection.

For the purification of drinking water from unknown sources.

For a daily mouth-wash to guard against pyorrhea.

As a body deodorant.

In bottles, 50c and \$1 at drug stores

Slightly higher in Canada

Zonite

If your druggist cannot supply you, send 50c direct to the Zonite Products Co.



I should like to have a free copy of the illustrated booklet you have prepared. (S-31)

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____

SMART SET

AUGUST
1925*True Stories from Real Life*

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Although manuscripts and drawings are submitted at the owners' risk, every effort will be made to return those found unavailable



I wasn't more than nine years old then, and I used to hear my sister singing at her work whenever she was home. It always gave me a kind of happy feeling. And then she'd rumple my hair and kiss me.

I never understood how she could feel badly—and yet one day I ran into her room and found her crying. Of course I backed out as quickly as I could.

When she came downstairs she was singing again—but she couldn't fool me a bit after that. And lots of times her eyes were so red I knew she'd been crying again.

I was only nine years old then—I'm nineteen now. I'm beginning to understand!

**Read MY SISTER
in the
September SMART SET**

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Copyright 1924, by Magus Magazine Corporation. 25 cents a copy; subscription price, United States and possessions, \$3.00 a year; Canada, \$3.50; Foreign, \$4.00. All subscriptions are payable in advance. We cannot begin subscriptions with back numbers. Unless otherwise directed we begin all subscriptions with the current issue. When sending in your renewal please give us four weeks' notice. When changing an address, give the old address as well as the new and allow five weeks for the first copy to reach you. Entered as second-class matter, March 27, 1909, at the Post Office, New York, New York, under the act of March 3, 1879. Additional entry at the Post Office, Chicago, Illinois.



Fourteen Years a Conductor— Then Salesmanship and \$700 a Month



First Eight Days Earns \$107.32—"Last August, while employed by the Depot Filling Station, Inc., at \$22 a week, I enrolled in your Modern Salesmanship course, but hardly expected to achieve my first goal so quickly. I wish to thank you for your personal assistance on some of the problems, and especially in obtaining for me my present connection. In the eight working days since January first I have earned \$107.32, which not only places me in the 100% Club (with a large margin), but also proves clearly that LaSalle principles are sound."

R. J. SHEA, Massachusetts

Salary Doubled—Sales Increased 500%—"My salary was practically doubled a short time ago, but my greatest satisfaction comes from knowing that the amount of business I have written this year is easily five times greater than before." S. N. WILLIAMS, Kentucky.

DO you know the quickest way to make dreams come true?—It's the salesmanship way.

For out in the selling field, if a man makes good, "raises" come to him automatically—and many times a year.—There was C. A. Thomas, for example.

Thomas, a California man, had been a conductor on a railroad for fourteen years. "One day," said Mr. Thomas, telling of his experience, "I came in on my passenger run and never went out again. Instead, I undertook to sell real estate. The first month I did not make a sale. I saw that I needed something to help me, and I believed I would find it in LaSalle's training in Modern Salesmanship. You can judge for yourself the aid it gave me when I tell you that the next month I cleared \$700, and last month I averaged better than \$67 a day throughout the month."

J. J. Graney writes of similar success. He was a mail carrier when he enrolled with LaSalle.

"I have not worked nearly so hard since I have been selling," writes Graney, "but have increased my earning power about

400 per cent. During September I earned \$225, October \$500, November close to \$700, and I expect to make \$1,000 this month."

Were these men—and hundreds of others—merely "lucky"?

Men privileged to master Salesmanship thru the LaSalle Problem Method will tell you that their success was far from luck; it was the logical result of knowing the hows and whys of their profession.

Whether or not you have had experience in selling—that is not important. The point is that any man of average intelligence who will follow the LaSalle salary-doubling plan can quickly multiply his earnings. And this fact applies with doubled force to the man now in the field who is sincerely striving to increase his volume, to really sell in dozens of places which he now is forced to leave without an order.

The complete story of the LaSalle salary-doubling plan which thousands of men have followed with such gratifying results is outlined in a fascinating book entitled "Modern Salesmanship." This book tells clearly the opportunities in the selling field—points the way to a quick mastery of the very methods whereby the big producers top the list year after year, earn big five-figure salaries. The information contained in this book is of priceless value to the man seriously ambitious to make a real success in the selling field. And—the coupon brings it to you, free.

If your future is worth a two-cent stamp and two minutes of your time—place the coupon in the mail TODAY.

LA SALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY

The World's Largest Business Training Institution

LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY

Dept. 850-SR

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

I shall be glad to receive an outline of your salary-doubling plan and full information regarding the opportunities in the business field I have marked below, all without obligation.

☐ **Modern Salesmanship:** Training for position as Sales Executive, Salesman, Sales Coach or Trainer, Sales Promotion Manager, Manufacturer's Agent, Solicitor, and all positions in retail, wholesale, or specialty selling.

Other LaSalle Opportunities: LaSalle opens the way to success in every important field of business.

If more interested in one of the fields indicated below, check here:

☐ **Business Management:** Training for Official, Managerial, Sales and Departmental Executive positions.

☐ **Higher Accountancy:** Training for position as Auditor, Comptroller, Certified Public Accountant, Cost Accountant, etc.

☐ **Commercial Law:** Reading, Reference and Consultation Service for Business Men.

☐ **Personnel and Employment Management:** Training in the position of Personnel Manager, Industrial Relations Manager, Employment Manager, and positions relating to Employee Service.

☐ **Modern Business Correspondence and Practice:** Training for position as Sales or Collection Correspondent, Sales Promotion Manager, Mail Sales Manager, Secretary, etc.

☐ **Banking and Finance:** Training for executive positions in Banks and Financial Institutions.

☐ **Law:** Training for Bar; LL. B. Degree.

☐ **Traffic Management—Foreign and Domestic:** Training for position as Railroad or Industrial Traffic Manager, Rate Expert, Freight Solicitor, etc.

☐ **Railway Station Management:** Training for position of Station Accountant, Cashier and Agent, Division Agent, etc.

☐ **Modern Foremanship and Production Methods:** Training for positions in Shop Management, such as that of Superintendent, General Foreman, Foreman, Sub-Foreman, etc.

☐ **Industrial Management Efficiency:** Training for positions in Works Management, Production Control, Industrial Engineering, etc.

☐ **Business English:** Training for Business Correspondence and Copy Writers.

☐ **Expert Book-keeping:** Training for position as Head Book-keeper.

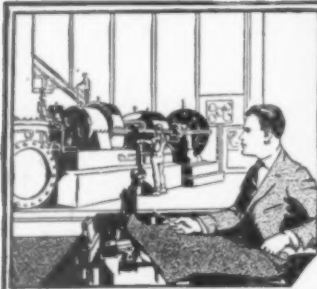
☐ **Commercial Spanish:** Training for position as Foreign Correspondent with Spanish-speaking countries.

☐ **Effective Speaking:** Training in the art of forceful, effective speech for Ministers, Salesmen, Fraternal Leaders, Politicians, Clubmen, etc.

☐ **C. P. A. Coaching for Advanced Accountants.**



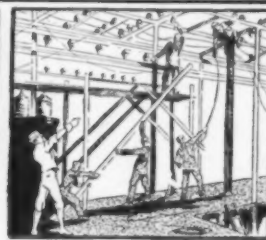
Name..... Present Position..... Address.....



Be Superintendent of an
Electrical POWER PLANT



Own Your Own Electrical
REPAIR SHOP



Boss Electrical
Construction Jobs



Be an Electrical CONTRACTOR

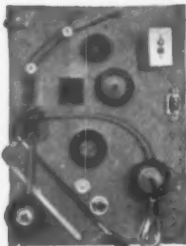


Chief
Engineer
Dunlap

I Guarantee you
a **JOB** and a
50% RAISE
or Money Refunded

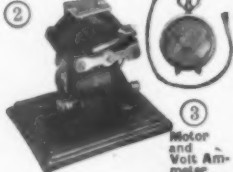
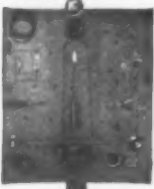
If you are now earning
less than \$40 a week,

enroll for my home training in Electricity and I will guarantee you a permanent, satisfactory job after you finish—guarantee you at least 50% more pay—or refund every cent of your money I give you this written guarantee because my training actually makes you an Electrical Expert. The AMERICAN SCHOOL stands back of this guarantee with resources of over a million dollars.



Wiring Outfit

① Wiring Outfit



③ Motor
and
Volt-
Ammeter



④ Radio
Receiving Set

GO INTO ELECTRICITY

—the
Business of a
Million Opportunities

Go to Electrical
School
AT HOME!

While you're at it, while you're spending your time and money to be a success, *Train* for the big-pay *Boss* jobs in the world's fastest growing industry. The world's work is now being done by Electric power. Autos, ships, buildings, aeroplanes, all electric equipped. Electric lights, everywhere. Think of Radio, Telephones, Telegraph, Electric railways. This business DOUBLED in the last 9 years, and they say it will double again in the next 6 years!

\$60 to \$200 a Week for Electrical Experts

Enormous demand for all-around Electrical Experts as Power Plant Superintendents, Chief Electricians, Foremen of Construction, Electrical Draftsmen, Radio Engineers, etc. And with my training you can go into business for yourself with little capital and make \$3,000 to \$12,000 a year.

4 Electrical Outfits

Given You don't have to leave your home or quit your job, you don't need post-graduate Laboratory courses when you are Dunlap-trained. I send you these 4 costly, complete Electrical Outfits, all the Laboratory and Shop apparatus you need to understand Electrical laws, theories and principles easily and quickly. *Not one penny extra for this equipment.*

Write Me AT ONCE!

The first half of my training is APPLIED ELECTRICITY, a complete course. In the second half I give you Electrical Engineering subjects, doubling the quantity of instruction usually included in home-study training. Don't enroll for any home-training until you get a copy of my job-and-raise guarantee—until you get my sensational offers. Compare my 4 outfits with others—compare my training with others—compare my guarantee with others before you decide. I will show you how to become an Electrical Expert right in your own home—in spare time, for the least cost and in double quick time. Mail coupon for free book, surprise offers and complete information.

Earn While You Learn

As early as your eleventh lesson, I give you special training in wiring, Radio, Electrical repairing, motors, etc., so you can go out and start turning your instruction into cash. It's no trick to earn enough in a single evening to pay one month's tuition cost. So you needn't let lack of ready money or anything else keep you from this wonderful home-training.

**MAIL
COUPON
QUICK!**

Chief Engineer Dunlap,
AMERICAN SCHOOL
Dept. EC-251 Drexel Av. &
58th St., Chicago.

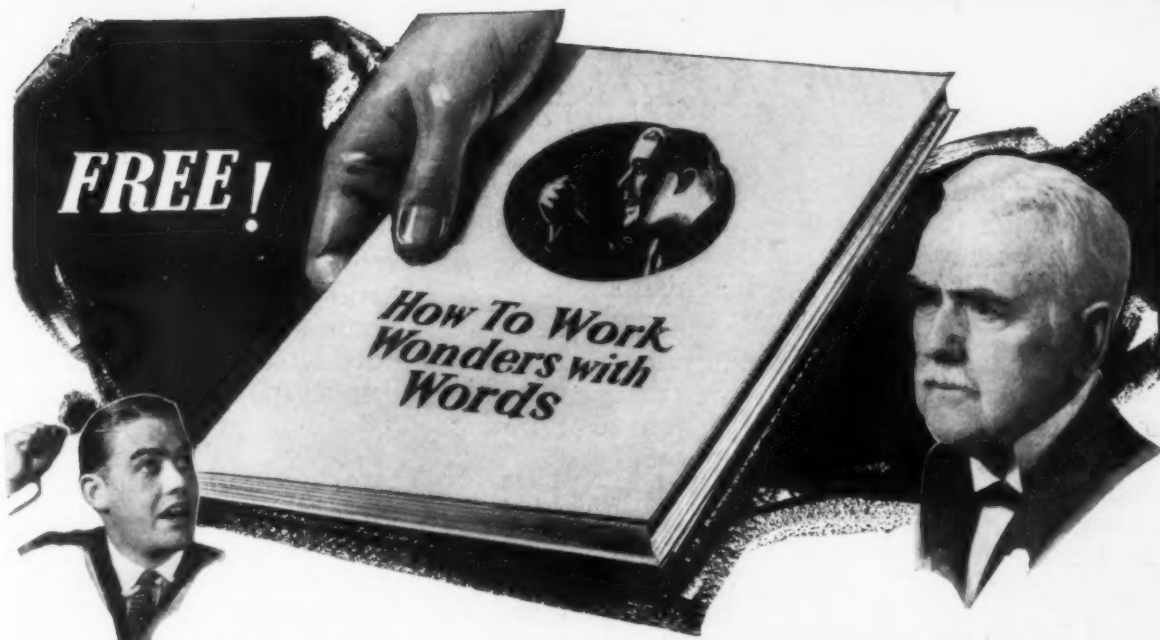
Please rush guarantee of a job and a 50% raise, free book, surprise offers and complete information on how I can become a real Electrical Expert at home in spare time.

Chief Engineer DUNLAP, Electrical Division

AMERICAN SCHOOL

Dept. EC-251 Drexel Ave. & 58th St., Chicago

Name.....
Address.....



Not Only Men Who Have Made Millions Send for this Astonishing Book ~but Thousands of Others!

Many successful business men have sent for this amazing book now mailed free. Such men as Walter O. Ford, of the Ford Manufacturing Company; C. F. Bourgeois, President of Robischon and Peckham Company; H. B. McNeal, President of the Telephony Publishing Company; Guy H. Shearer, Cashier Filer State Bank; and many other prominent, prosperous business executives are unstinting in their praise of it. But don't think it is only for big men. Thousands of young men have found in this book the key to advancement in salary and position, popularity, standing, power and real success. You can now obtain your copy absolutely free by writing at once.

Today business demands for the big, important, high-salaried jobs men who can dominate others—men who can make others do as they wish, whether it be one man or a thousand. It is the power of forceful convincing speech that causes one man to jump from obscurity to the presidency of a great corporation. Another from a small, unimportant territory to the salesmanager's desk. Another from the rank and file of political workers to a post of national prominence as a campaign speaker. A timid, retiring, self-conscious man to change almost overnight into a popular and much applauded after-dinner speaker.

Either You Become A Powerful Speaker—or Your Training is FREE

You are shown how to conquer stage fright, self-consciousness, timidity, bashfulness and fear—those things which keep you silent when men of lesser ability get what they want by the sheer power of convincing speech. You are told how to bring out and develop your priceless "hidden knack"—the natural gift within you—which will win for you advancement in position and salary, popularity, standing,

power and real success. This simple, easy, sure and quick training is guaranteed to do this. If it fails your training will not cost you a single penny.

What 15 Minutes A Day will Show You

How to talk before your club or lodge.
How to address bond meetings.
How to propose and respond to toasts.
How to make a political speech.
How to tell interesting stories.
How to make after-dinner speeches.
How to converse interestingly.
How to write better letters.
How to sell more goods.
How to train your memory.
How to enlarge your vocabulary.
How to develop self-confidence.
How to acquire a winning personality.
How to strengthen your will-power and ambition.
How to develop your power of concentration.
How to become a clear, common accurate thinker.
How to be the master of any situation.

Easy for Anyone Only 15 Minutes a Day Required

There is no mystery about the power to work wonders with words. Practically anyone can do it. It makes no difference how embarrassed or self-conscious you now are when called upon to speak. Certain principles will show you how to rise head and shoulders above the mass and make yourself the dominating figure in any gathering.

How to be a leader among men. How to rise to any occasion and demand what you want with force, vigor and conviction. Give only fifteen minutes a day in the privacy of your own home and you can accomplish all this in a few short weeks.

MAKE THIS FREE TEST

If you will fill in and mail the coupon at once you will receive besides this remarkable new book, "How to Work Wonders with Words," an amazing five minutes test by which you can determine for yourself whether you are one of the 7 men out of

every 9 who possess the "hidden knack" of powerful speech but do not know it. Decide for yourself if you are going to allow fifteen minutes a day to stand between you and success. You, like thousands of others, can quickly and easily learn how to bring out and develop your "hidden knack" and gain for yourself high position, standing, money and power. Just send your name and address now—thousands have found this to be the biggest forward step of their lives. If it has played such an important part in the lives of many big men, may it not in yours?

North American Institute
3601 Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois
Dept. 318C

NORTH AMERICAN INSTITUTE, Inc.,
Dept., 318C, 3601 Michigan Ave.,
Chicago, Ill.

Please send me FREE and without obligation, my copy of your famous book, "How to Work Wonders with Words." Also your FREE 5-minute test by which I may make a self-examination.

Name

Address

City..... State.....

Two Kinds of Strength

THIS world of ours presents strange contrasts in its ever-shifting reflection of life. Sometimes we pass them by unthinking until some miracle makes us see.

At the gateway to the Mediterranean Sea stands a great rock. It has been made famous the world over as a symbol of strength. It is supposedly impregnable, although it has really been captured by an enemy several times in the last few hundred years.

But whether or not it has been captured makes little difference. There it has stood through all the ages like a sentinel guarding the gateway between the East and the West.

Doesn't it stir your imagination? Doesn't it make you feel that after all *Time* means very little?

THIS rock—the symbol of strength—has seen strange and awful changes in the world. It has seen *man*, a tiny little creature compared with the great animals about him, conquer the world. It has seen him build a tiny boat, then hoist a sail, and then—what a strange, uncanny feeling it must have been—pass by in a great log which moved whither he would, a log which had fires inside, and chimneys!

It saw the light of that first Christmas Day, nearly two thousand years ago. It saw the Roman Empire fall, and the glory of Spain decay.

It felt the working of men within itself until it was honeycombed with passages lighted by electricity.

Its rocky sides are spotted with gun pits, where man has prepared to withstand his enemies.

For, with all its awe-inspiring strength, man has conquered—because he has a soul. God breathed into his tiny body

the breath of wisdom and he has used it to good advantage.

He has discovered the secret treasures of the earth and used them. He has built great cities and populated them. He has recorded what he has learned so that his children may make further progress.

IT IS a glorious thing to be a part of a great people. It is a glorious thing to have the strength and courage of a pioneer. For if we are to show in our own way strength which can be compared with the *Rock of Gibraltar*, we must continue to do new things in a new way, to break new trails, to subdue the world.

SMART SET has been breaking a new trail during the last year. We have broken into a new country where the sky seems to be closer to us. Everything is new and fresh and *clean*—and we want to keep it that way.

You never know just what the stories are going to be like in SMART SET. They cannot be classified and tossed to one side. I'll *dare* you to read the issue *through* and not find *ONE* that will make you glad you did it.

WE CAN'T expect you to be enthusiastic about every story, because we are all individuals and our tastes differ. But, like the men in the diamond mines, we must keep searching until we find the beautiful gems which lie hidden in the earth. SMART SET is digging all the time for new stories. Some of them are better than others, in your eyes. They vary just as diamonds do. But our constant search is rewarded in the long run, for our strength is not that of Gibraltar, but that of *MAN*, creating, inventing, mining, building, *dreaming*; working to find the biggest diamond of them all.

Mr. Ward photographed in his office at Postl's, Chicago



Men Who Want More Money Will Listen to This Man!

You may think that my arithmetic is funny, but it certainly worked for me. You can add ten and ten in the ordinary way and you will never get more than 20—and that's just about what I was earning a week before I left the States for 20 months' active service in France. When I came back I determined that I would not go back to the old grind! I found a way to put one ten alongside of the other, so that the total made over a thousand dollars—and that's what I averaged every 30 days for the last twelve months. Through the simple method I'll tell you about I made \$13,500 last year.

By A. H. WARD

There's no reason why any ambitious man should not follow in my footsteps. I read an advertisement, just as you are now reading my story—it told about W. Hartle of Chicago, who had been in the R. R. Mail service for ten years. Hartle made a sudden change—against the advice of his friends—and made over \$1000 the first thirty days. Berry, of Winterset, Iowa—a farm-hand—made \$1000 the first month. George Kearns made \$523.00 the first two weeks. F. Wynn made \$554.37 the first seven days, and Miller, a former stenographer, made \$100 a week after making this change.

Well, man, I sat up and took notice. If they could do these things—ordinary men like myself—I knew that I had a chance. I investigated and found that what the advertisement said was true. Fact is, you can figure it out for yourself in simple logic. Consider these two points:

Easy for Two Reasons

First: There is no money and no future in the routine job. Every one knows that. If you want to make the real money, you must get into the producing end of the business—be a salesman. Wait, now, don't let the word SALESMAN scare you.

For the second thing is this: Salesmanship is governed by rules and laws. It is just like learning the alphabet. And men who always have thought that salesmen are "born" and not made, very quickly learn that there are certain definite ways to approach different types of prospects to get their undivided attention—certain ways to stimulate keen interest—certain ways to overcome objections—batter down competition and make the prospect act. And any man can learn these simple principles. I know that because *I've proved it to myself!*

This Free Book Started Me

I sent for the book that Mr. Greenslade, the president of The National Salesmen's Training Association, will send free to any man who sends the coupon.

After reading I enrolled. Within one year I had averaged over \$1000 a month income—\$13,500 the first year—and in addition was elected as an officer of Postl's of Chicago.

Now don't misunderstand me. I don't say that you can do as well. You may not make a thousand dollars the first month. You may not have as much determination to succeed as I had. But I do say that

since looking into the matter can't cost you a cent, you should at least investigate. You can't help but benefit, and if you're any man at all you should double or triple your income without half trying.

Send Today for FREE Book

If you really want the good things of life—the things that only money can buy—I urge you to send the request blank in this page to Mr. Greenslade. He will send you Free and without any obligation "Modern Salesmanship," the book that started me on the road to success. Then decide for yourself. Even if you don't go ahead you will be out only two cents. And on the other hand you may find a way to double or triple your salary in a short period. Just mail the attached coupon today with your name and address.

Yours for success,
A. H. WARD

Written for Mr. J. E. Greenslade, President National Salesmen's Training Association, Dept. K-26, N. S. T. A. Building, Chicago, Ill.



MR. J. E. GREENSLADE, President National Salesmen's Training Association Dept. K-26, N. S. T. A. Building, Chicago, Ill.

Send me free the book that gave Mr. Ward his start. This does not obligate me.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Age _____ Occupation _____



A woman discovered this new use

SHE and her husband were motoring cross-country. They landed in a town one evening after a hard, dusty, all-day drive.

The hotel could accommodate them but there wasn't a bath to be had for love or money.

She was a fastidious person. The room without bath was almost a tragedy. She simply *had* to freshen up before dinner.

Listerine—occurred to her. She doused a towel with it and in a jiffy she felt almost as refreshed as though

she had had her tub. It was a revelation to her. So often, time or circumstances do not permit a bath or shower. Maybe after a hot shopping day; when traveling after summer sports.

On many, many such occasions you'll find Listerine a most refreshing, exhilarating substitute.

A new use for an old friend that we thought you'd like to know about—if you had not as yet discovered it for yourself.—Lambert Pharmacal Company, Saint Louis, U. S. A.

LISTERINE Throat Tablets are now available. Please do not make the mistake of expecting them to correct bad breath. Rely on the liquid, Listerine. Containing all of the antiseptic essential oils of Listerine, however, they are very valuable as a relief for throat irritations—25 cents.

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NO. 6

SMART SET

AUGUST
1925

True Stories from Real Life

AUGUST DAYS

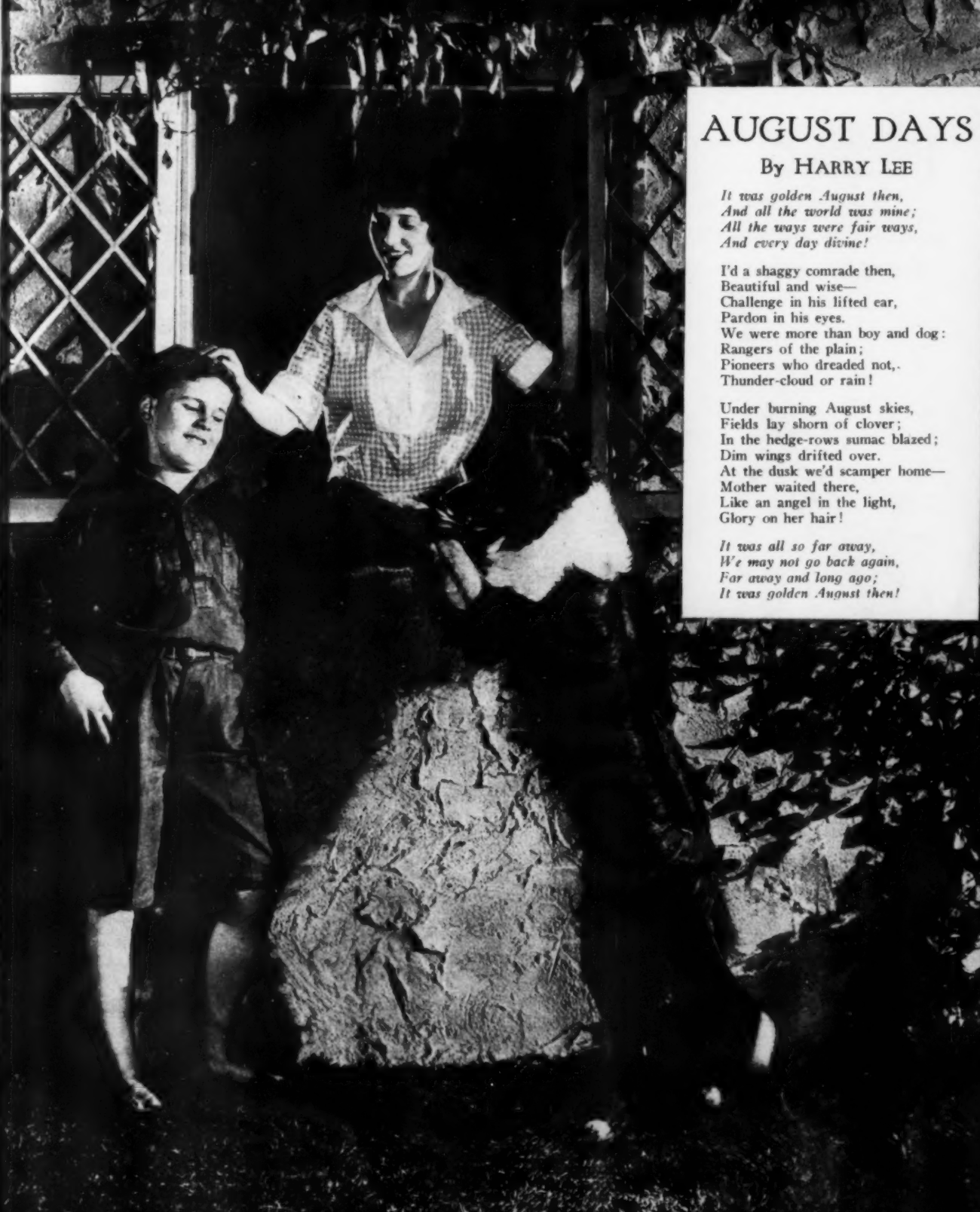
By HARRY LEE

*It was golden August then,
And all the world was mine;
All the ways were fair ways,
And every day divine!*

I'd a shaggy comrade then,
Beautiful and wise—
Challenge in his lifted ear,
Pardon in his eyes.
We were more than boy and dog:
Rangers of the plain;
Pioneers who dreaded not,
Thunder-cloud or rain!

Under burning August skies,
Fields lay shorn of clover;
In the hedge-rows sumac blazed;
Dim wings drifted over.
At the dusk we'd scamper home—
Mother waited there,
Like an angel in the light,
Glory on her hair!

*It was all so far away,
We may not go back again,
Far away and long ago;
It was golden August then!*



Don't Forget to

DR. FRANK

INTIMACY, like many other things, is beneficial if you don't get too much of it.

A motor is rested by throwing it out of gear. It comes back stronger than ever.

Friendships should be thrown out of gear

once in a while, too. They will be stronger afterwards.

A motor that can't be thrown out of gear has to be stopped, or it pounds itself to pieces.

If you feel that you are always "in gear" with a friend and have to do just as he does, or he has to do just what you do, your friendship, like the motor, will soon pound itself to pieces.

Every well-rounded man needs moments for meditation or individual action as much almost as he needs water and air. Each person is an individual with an individual personality, and friendships that cramp and confine, like a tile around the trunk of a young tree, are broken by the expansion.

When two friends sit talking and one of them falls into silent thought, if their friendship has no gear-shift the companion feels hurt.

WHO is estranged? Two friends explaining," once said a philosopher.

If you can't do what you want to once in a while without having to consider whether your



Shift the Gears

CRANE

friend will be offended or not, you have no gear-shift in your friendship and it is in danger of pounding itself to pieces.

It has been noticed that children who "see too much of each other" are the quickest to quarrel.

Take two high school girls. They will be together so much that you can't hear one's name without the other—always together, always for each other, always interested in the same things—and then all of a sudden they can't seem to get far enough from one another.

THE motor of friendship has to be rested sometimes. One of these three things happens: the motor is completely stopped, it is thrown out of gear, or it wears itself out. Two friends either stop their friendship in quarrels which leave a lasting scar, recognize each other's personality and allow for individual thought and action—throw the friendship out of gear at times—or it is broken off completely.

Thoreau was thinking of this when he said, "Individuals, like nations, must have suitable broad and natural boundaries; even a considerable neutral ground between them."

This neutral ground—periods when the gears are thrown out and the motor left running ready to be thrown back into gear on a moment's notice—gives friendships new power.

All lasting friendships are equipped with gear-shifts.



GRANVILLE

All sound seemed to stop for a moment—just perfect contentment. Larry had come home and claimed me!

My Little World

IT WAS the early part of summer. Through my bedroom window came fragrant breaths of perfume from the apple tree blossoms under my window. The sun's warm rays shining in my eyes awakened me. I turned over with a lazy yawn and started to snuggle down on the pillow to shield my eyes. Half awake, I tried to remember what day it was and what I had to do—whether I could sleep longer or whether I had to get up. Then I sat upright in bed with my hands clasped before me—fully awake.

It was Wednesday, and Larry was coming home! My Larry, with the wavy mop of black hair and the winning smile and the devil shining from his steel blue eyes! No other girl in town had quite so much claim on Larry as I, because he took me to all the parties and picnics, driving in his rakish runabout, behind a pair of prancing bays.

And it was something in our town to have Larry Mason pay attention to you. The Masons had been the first settlers in Cortland County. Larry's great-great-grandfather had come over the mountains after the Revolution and cleared some land and started farming. Then when more people followed his lead he built a grain mill and a saw mill and the first little store, right

on the spot where the new five-story Mason building stands today.

The little park in the center of town is called Mason Park, the public library is called Mason Memorial Library, and the old school-house has "GILES MASON—1853" chiseled in the crumbling stone over the entranceway. The I.O.O.F. in town was first called the Mason Chapter, and the only fire company is called the Mason Hook and Ladder Company.

During the Civil War the Masons made harness for the government, adding many, many dollars to their widespread holdings of land. Some people claim that the harness was made of rotten leather, but who isn't slandered if they grow rich?

THE Masons were *somebody* in our town. Their boys were the only ones who ever went from Granville to college—until just recently. When Larry made his college football and baseball team, that put Granville on the map.

I can remember hearing old Dad Howser, one of our town characters, say one day in the post office, "I'll bet them college boys from Columbia in New York knowed



*Hear them! Like
the chatter of
a thousand
magpies winging
from place to
place, and
spreading their
story over
hillside and
valley.*

*I had an
insane desire
to lie on the
floor and
kick and
scream every
time I heard
it.*

the kind of boys they brought up in Granville when Larry knocked 'em all golly-west and made a touchdown on Thanksgiving Day."

That was my Larry, and he had written me a letter asking me to please be at the station to meet him when he got home—as though I wouldn't have been there anyway, with all the rest of the town.

I jumped out of bed and ran to the window and pushed back the branch of apple blossoms that jutted in, sending a shower of white and pink petals over the floor. It was a cloudless day—perfect! The picnic and dance we had planned for Larry would be a success.

Larry was twenty-two; I was twenty. Perhaps when he got off the train he would kiss me right there before everyone, and that would mean that he was going to marry me.

Just the day before he went back from Easter vacation, one of those warm days in early spring, we had taken a walk down along the lane that bordered the Mason

farm out by the fair-grounds, and Larry had held my hand and told me about the different fellows at school; their sisters who came down to visit them; the offer he had had from the father of the wealthiest boy in school to go to New York and work in his office. But he said

he guessed Granville was good enough for him, and he was coming back there to go to work in his father's bank.

"Well, going to college hasn't spoiled you after all, has it, Larry? You still like old Granville, don't you?" I asked.

"I couldn't ever be happy any place else," Larry answered very dreamily, and looked up into my eyes. His hand slipped over mine; I giggled some silly thing, jumped to my feet, and began to walk back toward the farm. But I stopped

in a minute and looked back; Larry hadn't budged from where he sat.

His expression was so serious that I walked back to him. He just sat there until I took his hand and pretended to pull him to his feet. Then that winning, boyish smile

*I could see the town shaking
its head wisely; I could hear
it saying:*

*"Larry had better keep his
eye on that girl . . . ketchin'
her encouragin' young Chase
to make love to her—"*



*During the evening
I was besieged on
every side for
dances.*

flashed on his face, and he gathered me into his arms that were as strong as steel bands.

"Kiss me, dear," he whispered. And I turned my lips up to his and he kissed me—so hard that it frightened me a little. I know that when he looked into my eyes he could see how much I loved him. But I pushed him away and ran down the path until he caught up with me again, gathering me in his arms and kissing me again and again. They were just the kisses of two children who have found something that is new and unexplored; we groped in the darkness, tasting of their sweetness.

After a while we walked back to the farm, hand in hand. Larry carried me over the little brook behind the house, while I nestled my head against his shoulder and he looked down into my eyes and laughed a boyish, shy laugh.

Then we got into Larry's runabout and whizzed back through the center of town, the fast hoofbeats of Larry's bays bringing people out on their front porches and peeping through their front curtains.

My! How proud I felt!

Right in the center of town, near the water-fountain, one of the bays broke and began to gallop; he then reared on his hind legs as Larry pulled him in. Everyone in town came rushing to the store windows as we just made

the turn and went dashing madly up Center Street. I was awfully happy because I knew Larry could handle them without a bit of trouble; I knew, too, that everyone in town would be talking about how Larry's bays nearly ran away downtown, and they would all say that I was there beside Larry in his two-seater; that just as we swung around Center Street on two wheels Larry smiled into my eyes to reassure me, and "that little brat" of Jim Barleys shouted, "Why don't you kiss her now, Larry?" Things like that traveled fast in Granville.

THAT night at supper I was so excited and happy that I left most of my food untouched. My two maiden sisters scowled at me and said I was acting like a simpleton over that Larry Mason. My family and the Masons never got along after my father died, and we lost our home because Giles Mason wouldn't renew the mortgage that father had been paying interest on for years. We had to sell and buy another little place down in another section of town.

But I was glad to get away from our old house. It always seemed so big and dreary and ghostlike to me. It sat on the highest hill in town, next to the Masons, and in the wintertime the wind came whistling down the valley, swirling the snow in great banks against the north side of the house and whining through the tall pine trees that stood in the front yard. I used to lie awake at night, wide-eyed, expecting to be carried away in its

frozen blasts. I shall never forget how dreary it was.

Somehow the house was typical of all my family. They couldn't seem to get the chill of winter out of their blood. Father was a deacon in the church, and every Sunday used to wear his black suit and tie, his squeaky black shoes and a solemn, mournful expression, while he passed the collection plate. Mother and my two sisters would sit in the hard, shiny pews, bolt upright, rigid, looking neither to right nor the left, as though they thought God would punish them if they moved a muscle. By the time I was fifteen I was so sick and tired of hearing my mother and sisters say: "God will punish you if you do that, Blanche," that I had an insane desire to lie on the floor and kick and scream every time I heard it.

One time a man who was giving music lessons in town to pay his way through college, came to the house to see one of the girls. He had a wide mouth, and eyes that twinkled when he told funny stories. He rollicked with me until my oldest sister, lips drawn taut, eyes smouldering fire, ordered me from the room. But before he would let me go he said some funny little poem about a saucy yellow nasturtium lost in a bed of weeping hearts.

He never came back again.

It was Larry's last year at college, and he had asked me to come up for graduation. But Mother wouldn't let me go. She just sniffed and said, "I don't think we even need to discuss that."

I prayed each night that Larry would want to get married in June. Because his father had more money than everyone in Cortland County put together, I knew we wouldn't have to wait for lack of finances. I hoped he would want to get married, and then we could go out and live on the Mason farm outside of town.

IT HAD the sweetest little cottage on it, with hollyhocks and black-eyed susans all around the house, and an arbor of rambler roses just inside the gate. A big lilac bush stood in the front yard, and a grove of widespread maples in the back, right beside the little brook. I used to walk out there all by myself and dream of Larry and me living there alone, driving in town behind his bays and having everyone shout, "Hello Larry, 'lo Blanche! How'r the farmers?" or "How'r the newlyweds? Pretty darn near time you kids was havin' some-thin' runnin' aroun' the house besides the fence."

When I went down to breakfast the morning Larry was coming home, Mother took me in her arms. Her eyes



I would have died rather than go back and face Granville.

When Larry had gone back to school I foolishly told Mother he had kissed me, and she told the girls, all of whom acted as though I had broken all of the ten commandments. They predicted that he would have nothing more to do with me, because he had kissed me; they hinted that they had thought that kissing was the indication that we would marry.

And then, because of the way my mother and sisters acted whenever anyone asked them about Larry and me, everyone in town began to think something was wrong.

were wet, and I was sure she had been praying. My sisters looked at me as though I were something that was about to be offered on an altar of sacrifice. But it didn't bother me then. Larry was coming home—that was all that mattered.

How that morning dragged—a hundred seconds to a minute; a thousand minutes to every hour!

When I went downtown everyone gave me a cheery little grin and said, "Well, Blanche, Larry gets home on the one-thirty, don't he?" Then [Turn to page 81]

As Though I Cared!

"C'mon out in our back yard 'n play!" she was saying, as she flung aside the broken doll. "I ain't mad at y'."

That's the way Nita has thrown the hurts and sorrows and tears of all her life—into the discard of forgotten things.

I THINK the first time I ever saw Anita was the day she clipped me behind the ear with the jagged head of her broken doll. Boylike, I had tripped her, and her doll had crashed on the pavement. For a moment she whimpered, then her brown eyes flashed fire and I saw stars.

When I took my hand from the place she had struck, there was blood on the tips of my fingers. I took a brave step toward her and she drew back the doll. For an instant I hesitated; then, screwing up my face and bellowing at the top of my lungs, I started homeward as fast as my fat little legs would carry me. Loud, derisive cries of "cry baby" followed me into my own house.

Mother asked me what I had done before Anita struck me. Having been taught to tell the truth, I told her, and she sent me back to say that I was sorry. Gall and wormwood! Besides, I wasn't sure but that she could hit even harder with her broken doll's head. But I swallowed my pride and my fear and went back to Anita's front yard. She stood there waiting, her sparkling brown eyes defiant and unafraid.

After a moment of scuffling the dirt in the roadway I managed to blurt, "Mama sent me back to say I'm sorry."

Little lights played in the brown eyes and they began to crinkle into a smile. Her tight lips parted and a line of tiny white



None but those who went to France and came back alive to the ones they loved can know what those first few minutes meant.



pearls came into view. Her full, peach cheeks pushing upward made narrow slits of the brown eyes as her smile widened into a grin. That grin! It is as much a part of her as her arms.

"C'mon out in our back yard 'n play!" she was saying, as she flung aside the broken doll. "I ain't mad at y'."

That is the way Nita has thrown the hurts and sorrows and tears of all her life—into the discard of forgotten

things. And, traitor to her sex, she leaves them there.

How I worshiped and served her from that day on! Always afraid of her and yet not afraid, because I learned that she wouldn't hurt unless hurt first. I followed her in and out of mischief, like an adoring subject follows his queen.

For the first eight years of our schooling we were tutored together through an arrangement made by our families for economy's sake. She told me when to study and what, and I never questioned why. The first year we were separated, and she went to one school while I went to another, I made absolutely no progress with my studies. No one could understand it at first. Then they decided that it was because she wasn't about, to tell me what and when to study. I had a mind of my own—a stubborn one, too—but she could handle me when everyone else had failed.

OUR first serious break came when we were fourteen. We were at dancing school—our third lesson, I think. I was doing an old-fashioned schottische with Nita. Grace is hardly a word that can be applied to the average boy of fourteen, and I was no exception to the general rule. I took two steps south as Nita started north. My hand in some manner caught in her dress and nearly pulled half of it from about her.

Those brown eyes shot fire! As she took a step in my direction the dress sagged perceptively. She hesitated while I stood there wide-eyed, trying mutely to say that I was sorry. Her shoulders and cheeks became a bright red. Tears came to her eyes and she rushed into the girls dressing-room amidst the laughs of our crowd.

For four days I suffered, while she refused to so much as glance in my direction. I might as well have been an unseen ghost stalking by her. Then one day she turned her head toward me as I passed. That grin! And I became her captive again.

When we were both twenty no one ever thought of seeing Nita go anywhere without me, or me without her. It was just taken for granted among all our friends. We just belonged to each other: sort of twin birches that have grown up side by side.

WE HAD it all planned long before we got through high school that Nita would go to Barnard and I would go to Columbia, so that we wouldn't have to be separated. And we did for a year—

Until 1916. My people were of French descent and they felt the war. It wasn't just a detached war to them. They had cousins who gave their lives and the lives of their children. America was their country, but

their hearts bled with France, for France.

It got under my skin, too. Nita and I began to talk about it more and more. Then one night—it was in the fall of 1916, and the Germans were falling back from the Argonne to the Ourcq to burrow in before they started another offensive after the Marne, leaving the sons of my grandfather's France to try to stem the tide that would come—Nita took my hand and held it

close against her cheek. In a moment I felt a tear run across my hand—and then another.

I tried to comfort her, tried to take her in my arms, but she pushed me away and said, half-sobbing, "It's your soul, Phil—whether it will live or die. I've known all the time you'd have to go—that you wanted to go; that only our love held you—"

For a moment her sobs choked her and she clung close to me. Tears! Just a woman's tears, but they scalded my hands and my cheeks, for they were tears of blood that Nita cried that night!

"Yes, dear, I've known, too," I said. "But I've been waiting for you to tell me. I knew you would—my Nita."

Two weeks later I boarded a steamer bound for

few Americans had gone in the French air service and it was there that I finally placed my application. Three weeks later I was sent to the aviation depot at Dijon and given a uniform and equipment. Then to Pau, where I was taught to fly. After receiving my training in a Spad, the fastest plane in the French service and used only for actual pursuit or fighting service, I was sent to join the now famous LaFayette Escadrille, officially known as "124."

IT WAS all like a dream, and even today it seems a long nightmare. Little things stand out—the terrible long nights, seeing Nita's eyes beckoning, feeling the touch of her hand and her lips. And something within me kept saying that I would never know the happiness



France, going toward what I believed was my bit for the world. But my heart stayed clasped tightly between the hands of my Nita as she pressed them to her breast as though something within her soul pained more than she could bear.

For the first three months in France I worked with an American ambulance section. But the more I saw of the splendor of the fight the French were making, the more I felt that I should be out in front fighting. A

of a life with her. I drank to drown the awful yearning that held me, but I never so much as touched the hand of a woman.

Then one morning, just before the break of dawn, a French orderly called into my ear, "C'est l'heure, monsieur." While slipping into my fur-lined shoes and combination, I sipped a cup of coffee. Then I felt in my pocket for Nita's ring, the luck charm she had given me. A little cold chill went through me as I found the pocket empty. I ran my hand through my other pockets. Frantically, I searched about my room, tore my things from my trunk. I heard the mechanics test the roaring motor of my plane, then the rapid "tut-tut-tut" as they tested my machine-gun. The light

of the new day came hurtling through my window and I knew that I must take the air, charm or no charm. As I slipped on my hood and goggles a feeling of apprehension stole over me, and I said a little prayer to Nita; she smiled back at me.

Seven minutes after giving my little bus the air I had climbed eight thousand feet. The sun was lighting the east, and to the south the Alps jutted up through the clouds, glistening like icebergs in the morning sun. In the distance I could see the straight course of the Rhine. Below were enemy trenches looking like a network of pencil marks on brown paper.

As I climbed there appeared puffs of white and black and green smoke from anti-aircraft shrapnel. One burst nearly under my nose, and I shifted my course and



*We were held up
as the happiest
and most devoted
couple known...
Nita was a perfect
hostess.*

climbed another thousand feet going through a solid layer of clouds. Above was the bright sun and the blue sky; below a billowing sea of white.

Only the roar of my motor broke the awful stillness. As I worked into a hole through the clouds, three planes with the black Maltese cross of the Germans on their wings came into view. Turning my plane, like a fish going back to water, I plunged in irregular curves and circles at an angle so steep that I seemed to be standing in the forepart of my fuselage. The rapid "tut-tut-tut" of a machine-gun came to my ears. I circled and plunged again to get out of range, and then swept upward. I pressed the release on my machine-gun as a German plane came over my sights. In the fraction of a second I saw the pilot crumble, the observer falling face down

across the cockpit. Their wings seemed to almost leave the plane as it started on its dizzy circles earthward in flames. A feeling of cold nausea stole over me. Then an explosive bullet detonated on my windshield and tore a gash in my cheek. The blood blinded me and I tried to get away with a vertical dive. My machine went into a corkscrew and swung over on its back, its white belly turned upward. Before I could straighten out they dove on me from opposite sides riddling my plane and severing an elevating plane.

Nita's brown eyes smiled into mine as I fell earthward, trying desperately to regain control. Finally I felt my ailerons quiver and take; then I slanted downward and crossed the trenches at six hundred feet to take a ground fire that left a burning, searing pain through my left side. But I landed on a meadow just behind the firing line, where they lifted me from my junked plane and took me to a field hospital, too weak from loss of blood to stand.

In another month I was discharged from the French service and invalidated home. Nita met me at the pier and the other part of me lived again. It was just as though one half of me had been dead from the day I left her, and had now come back to life. None but those who went to France and came back alive to the ones they loved can know what those first few minutes meant when I found myself in her arms again; I was hardly aware of the others who gazed at us. My mother, my family, my home, they all counted. But Nita was a part of me.

THREE weeks later we were married. Oh, the wonder of those first few months. I scarcely dared touch her, lest she fly away or vanish, for she seemed like some fairy princess to me.

We took a little apartment in the Greenwich Village section of New York—just two rooms and a little closet where there was a cupboard and a place to attach an electric stove to cook our meals when we wished. A little brick fireplace with brass andirons in front of which we placed a lazy old divan; little lamps with gloriously colored shades that Nita made herself; a breakfast table that folded up.

At night we would sit before the fire and I would tell her how my heart had yearned for her while I had been in France, and she would make the tears come to my eyes and little thrills play through me with her funny little stories of how she talked to me and prayed for me while she waited. And then she would shudder, and put her face down close against my coat, and in a moment look up into my eyes; there would be a tear trickling down her cheek.

Because of my flying experience in France, I managed to get a position on the staff of an aeroplane company that was making planes for the government. My work took me to the various government flying fields all over the United States, and while I was gone on these trips Nita drove an ambulance and knit size ten socks for soldiers with size twelve feet.

ONE evening when Nita and I were coming out of an uptown hotel, I felt a hand on my shoulder. Turning, I looked into the beaming face of Dave Rathbun, an American who had been in my Escadrille. He had transferred to the United States service and was an instructor at an aviation field on Long Island. We nearly blocked traffic as we slapped one another on the back and said over and over, "Well, I'll be damned!" Of course he went to dinner with us, and then we went with him to meet a girl named Elsie, and then we all went to the theatre and celebrated until the small hours of the morning.

The next day I had to go west, so I didn't see Dave

again for three or four weeks—or his girl, Elsie.

On the seventh of November, 1918, I was inspecting some planes in the middle West. Suddenly all the available whistles in the world began to blow, and all the people who weren't already crazy threw everything to the winds, including discretion, and in some instances their clothes, and joined in the general celebration.

WHEN I got back to my hotel I found a telegram awaiting me. It was from Nita. Steadying myself against a dresser in my room, amidst the howls and songs of the mad bunch of officers who were with me, I read:

PLEASE HURRY HOME, DEAREST. DAVE AND ELSIE AND I ARE CELEBRATING AND WON'T STOP UNTIL YOU JOIN US. ALL MY LOVE. NITA.

I managed to get there in time for the second and real armistice declaration, and we proceeded to celebrate all over again. Nita made me put on my old French uniform, and with Dave I managed to collect about a thousand kisses from strange girls, while Nita smiled proudly upon me. But I didn't care for their kisses. Just the touch of Nita's hand was worth a hundred thousand of their lips.

As the country began to greet its returning heroes, and those heroes who lost faith in the promises that had been made them; and the wounded lost faith in all mankind; and the flappers and youths lost faith in all established traditions, the country began to squirm and worry with unrest.

We took a house in the suburbs the next summer because I needed to be out in the country, and because Dad had given me an interest in his business and I had more money.

Dave Rathbun and his fiancée, Elsie Macon, were our guests nearly every week-end. Our house seemed to be a place of joy to all the old crowd we had known, because they said it was the one happy homestead in all America. We were held up as the happiest and most devoted couple known, as the war-time marriages all about us began to dissolve.

True, our parties were sometimes a little wild, but they were decent in every phase of the word; no one ever tried to overstep the unwritten rules and regulations that exist.

Nita was a perfect hostess; she enjoyed having the house loaded with people. So did I, but when they had gone after a week-end we were always glad. It left us alone with our dreams and our little worlds of make-believe and of reality.

Along toward the last of the summer Nita spent a couple of weeks with some friends at the seashore. I stayed with Dave in New York, except over the week-end, when he and Elsie and I went out to my house to get a breath of air.

Saturday morning Dave took my car and drove down town to get a number of things for the house. While he was gone, Elsie and I fussed about the kitchen getting things in shape. I think that was the first time I ever really noticed Elsie. Her girlish laugh that ended in a

giggle caught my ear first and I began trying to say funny things and then waiting to hear her laugh. Then I happened to look squarely into her eyes when we were fussing over a cook-book and saw how dark and clear and sort of twinkly they were. My gaze went to her cheeks and the clear bluish whiteness of her temples—then I caught myself, and turned confusedly back to the cook-book.

As we stood there I felt something more powerful than myself drawing me toward her. My shoulder touched hers and I almost let my hand slip down to cover hers.

Then I caught myself and went into the living-room, swearing under my breath, as Dave drove up at the front gate. I helped him in with the packages and then went upstairs alone. I wanted to think. Was I one of the sort who couldn't get a step away from his wife without being a rotter? A million thoughts rushed through my head, and through it all there seemed to be a sort of elusive vision of Elsie's girlish face, and behind that another face with brown eyes with the sparkle gone from them.

After a while I went downstairs and we had a merry week-end, but I had to be constantly on my guard.

Monday morning when Dave and I went into town, Elsie stayed there at the house to greet Nita when she came home. And before we climbed into my car to go to the station Elsie kissed Dave good-by. I watched them, and when he dropped his arms, from about her she saw me watching and came over to me with a coaxing, wistful smile and put her lips up to mine. They were warm and full of life; I could feel them all the way to my office. Dave chided me for being done up after the easy, lazy week-end we had spent.

That was the beginning. After a while I began to meet Elsie in town for luncheon. She drew me, and I couldn't

help following. But I couldn't stand having her speak of Dave or Nita. She soon saw how it affected me, and never brought their names into our conversation.


THEN one night I stayed in town for dinner, because Nita had an engagement—I didn't know with whom, but we had an agreement that each would do as he pleased with no accounting to the other. So I phoned Elsie and asked her to have dinner with me. We went up on the roof of a large hotel. There was an orchestra, playing light stirring music, and soft lights. The cool, gentle breezes blowing up from the river blew strands of Elsie's blonde hair across her cheek like a caress. Her eyes twinkled into mine and my hand crept across the table and touched hers; it was like the first plunge in the icy waters of springtime. I devoured her with my eyes oblivious of the stares of the people about us.

After a while Nita flashed through my mind and struck me a blow in the face. I said we had better go, and we took a horse cab up Fifth Avenue, through the park, and over to her mother's apartment on Riverside Drive. Then—fools!—not content. [Turn to page 74]


When I arrived and saw the beauty of the little monoplane, I couldn't resist its lure. So I strapped myself in, they spun the propeller, the switch clicked,—she caught! They kicked out the blocks, the pilot "gave her the gun," and we went skimming over the ground, taking the air with the speed of a bullet.

Ahead of us was a grove of trees. Confident that the pilot would swing to the right, and not realizing our terrific speed, we struck the topmost branches before I had time to be alarmed—


Vacation Plays

A black and white portrait of Dorothy Hathaway. She has dark, curly hair and is looking over her shoulder towards the camera. She is wearing a dark, strapless garment. The background is dark and out of focus.


*DOROTHY HATHAWAY
as she appears in the
Shubert Musical Show
"Sky High."*

A black and white portrait of actress Phyllis Cleveland. She has short, dark, wavy hair and is looking slightly upwards and to the right with a soft expression. She is wearing a light-colored, possibly sequined or beaded, dress. The background is dark and out of focus.

*PHYLLIS CLEVELAND,
plays well in an ingenue
role in Erlanger's new
musical comedy, "Tell
Me More."*



*EDNA HIBBARD,
in the much talked
of Belasco produc-
tion, "Ladies of the
Evening."*



MARY ELLIS, in
the operetta, "Rose
Marie," which is
having a great run
on Broadway.

*Without answering me,
he quickly broke it over
his knee.*



*This Seems a Little
Queer—In Fact It
Is Queer. But
Life Has Its
Problems
for Everyone.
It Serves to
Stress the
Meaning of
the Phrase—*

The Way of a Woman

JOEL is coming to me tomorrow—Joel, large, sturdy, handsome, with a broad face of sturdy frankness that speaks of life, clean life, and joy in the living of it. He is coming half way across the continent in order to spend tomorrow with me in New York, obviously to celebrate my birthday; actually to try to quell for the moment the pain of an aching heart filled with longing for something that can never be. Tomorrow is not only another milestone in the uncertain road toward Destiny, but it has a second and deeper meaning: it is my wedding anniversary, the day that brought me love, the greatest ecstasy and the deepest sorrow of my life. And Joel is my son.

My anniversary! A glance at a small but well-kept picture on my mantel, and what recollections the old tintype brings to me! I can see the simple bridal party in a poor church in the tenement district of New York;

the pride with which we stood in the doors of the church and posed for a photograph; the radiance and joy of youth in spite of squalor and threatening poverty; the buoyancy of love and hope opposed to dismal dreariness.

After that I see the bitter struggle of everyday reality. Then a passing glimpse of the Goddess of Love, in Broadway's finest silks and richest satins. I thought that must always be her garb—and that was my undoing.

Twenty-five years ago I met Herman in a tailor shop in the tenement district of lower Second Avenue, New York City. I had taken a pair of my brother's trousers to be sewed, for they had been torn too badly for my industrious and overworked mother to sew again. How often had she sewed them already! Nevertheless, I picked up the shapeless things, skipped down the slovenly street, entered the dingy shop a block and a half from home, light-hearted and youthful, and flung the trousers

on the counter. I was sixteen then—and of Spanish type.

A rather good-looking youth came forward. Though I could hardly say that I was acquainted with him, yet he was not entirely new to me. I had seen him once or twice before, in the dark shadows of the gas-lighted shop stuck away in an ancient red brick building. He had pleasant rounded features, was of medium height, and though entirely unobtrusive, he seemed to have an individual air about him. He was of that kind that makes an impression without saying anything, by merely coming forward blandly and looking at me while his eyes asked the question, "What can I do for you? What will you have today?" I thought he was strangely misfit in his tailor shop surroundings.

In the half-light of the cramped and musty place, strewn with odd scraps of cloth and bits of thread, and smelling of a leaky gas iron, his smiling, speechless features were enhanced. I was quite startled, for a moment later I found myself staring as frankly at him as he at me, the trousers a forgotten question. Then I "came to" with a startled "Oh!" and picked up the rag from the counter. As he looked at the delapidated trousers his countenance fell. Once more he looked at me and his eyes seemed to say, "You can't do anything with those. They're too far gone."

I UNDERSTOOD his eyes and explained that something would have to be done nevertheless. He could see from my simple, over-ironed house-apron that my parents, like everyone else in the neighborhood, were poor, and I explained that he must do the best he could. He said the charge would be thirty-five cents. I hesitated. My mother said not to spend over a quarter, that it wasn't worth any more. Since that would have to be the charge, I knew it would be all right after a little arguing at home, but, under the spell of Herman's sleepy, yet penetrating eyes, I said I must first go back again to see if his price would be all right. I had even determined to take the extra dime from what little savings I had hidden away, if I found it necessary.

So I went out into the noisy street again, where the elevated constantly rumbled overhead. Our little flat on the third floor was directly opposite its tracks, so close to them that I often felt that I could jump across from our window. I walked toward home and back again slowly, wondering why I had spoken as I did. It was all very strange to me. I knew very little of love. Yet I knew, down deep, that it must be that.

I found my way back to the rickety old shop, and once more Herman with his smiling, round face and sleepy, listless eyes approached the counter littered with

old newspapers. There were no other customers in.

"Well, shall I go ahead?" his eyes asked me. I felt thrilled. Then I nodded, and left in confusion, awaiting the next day when I should have to call again, for I immediately decided that no other member of our numerous family should have that honor. I must see Herman's blue eyes once more.

The next day Herman's voice spoke. "Are they all right?" he said, in a soft mellow tone as listless as his eyes and just as fascinating.

"Yes," I replied, with a fluttering girlish heart that quivered under a cheap, home-made dress.

"Where do you live?" he said. "I've seen you around a lot."

I was thrilled to think that he had noticed me more than I had noticed him. I told him where I lived, and he concluded the conversation by saying that he hoped we might see each other again, "often." Then his eyes told me that he had to go back to his plodding work of patching, ripping, sewing and cutting, mostly old clothes long past the pale of respectability except in the crowded confines of the teeming tenements.

I left the store almost singing. Herman's eyes fascinated me; his voice hypnotized me. I knew I was in love. From the way Herman said that he hoped we might see each other "often" I knew that he loved me too. We did see each other often after that and I soon learned I had not guessed wrongly.

EVEN in the tenements, love may run a tumultuous course, though hampered by narrow, crowded streets filled with bawling children, and crashing with the noise of traffic and business. We took walks and elevated rides, and sat on the benches in the quietness of Battery Park. It was nice to watch the ships go twinkling across the watery carpet of the harbor after dusk. In a few months we were engaged, with the intention of marrying before the year was up. I was supremely happy.

Then I began to think. Though I was brought up in the poorest circumstances—my parents a few years before had immigrated to this country—a public school education was opening my eyes to see the limitations of my present mode of life and unhealthy, cramped surroundings. It made me wide awake to progress and American ideas. I was still very young, but I knew that I wanted something bigger, better, finer, than the crowded five-story tenements of lower Second Avenue. How I would get that something I did not know.

I wondered if Herman would be the means to that end. In my vague childish way I hoped so. I was too



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After that I see the bitter struggle of everyday reality. Then a passing glimpse of the Goddess of Love, in Broadway's finest silks. I thought that must always be her garb—and that was my undoing.

young to doubt it, and my early proposed marriage was not unwelcome news to my mother and father, who were both hard-pressed to meet our little monthly rent, and bills for food and clothes for six other children. So I would have had but little opportunity to change my announced intentions had I later wanted to.

However, the following thoughts came to mind. Herman was only a tailor's helper; he did not even own the dingy little shop he was working in. He had been a tailor's helper nearly all his life, beginning as a boy because of urgent necessity of helping his father who had been a tailor also and who had since died. Herman had been working at the trade six years; he was twenty now, and had shown little advancement, if any. When I asked him how much he was making he said thirteen dollars a week. In those days that sum was many times bigger than it sounds today. Two people could get along on that, in the tenements. Herman said he would work hard and make more soon.



I wondered why he had never progressed further already, owned a shop of his own after six years' time. I was afraid to ask the question directly, afraid of offending him, yet I felt that I must know, and so I finally spoke my mind. When I did, Herman looked surprised. His dreamy eyes opened a little wider. To me it seemed as if the thought of bigger things had never before struck him. He answered that times were always hard and work was scarce, but that he would branch out some day. He was sure he would—when the time came.

I HOPED that this expressed ambition would really arrive and that Herman would soon be more than just a tailor's helper. Of course he would rise and be successful. We were both young and much in love, so nothing else mattered. I liked his sleepy eyes, his musical, drawling voice with its listless fascination. I loved him for what he was.

When I turned seventeen we were married. The wedding was extremely simple. There was no expensive gown of trailing lace, and we could not, of course, afford a honeymoon. So, after a hearty and happy meal in my family's crowded flat, the festivities were practically concluded and Herman went back to work the next morning. Life showed little kindness to us in those days.

By diligent saving, and by living in Herman's room, we finally scraped together enough to move into a little better neighborhood uptown, where Herman got a position with a higher class tailor at a raise of a dollar a week. He said he would do better soon. But the rent of our new apartment was higher, and when that and our food was paid for there was little left. There was great need of an increase in salary. The months went by. It did not come.

In a short time our first baby came. This brought real hardships to us. Babies seem to have a habit of coming most regularly in the homes of the poorest people, and we were still very poor. Herman was very proud, but still sad. In his helpless state of failing to provide better for us, he almost cried in his soft and listless way. But we managed, one way or another, and finally moved back to Second Avenue where the money would go farther. The baby got along nicely.

When I had recovered my good health again, I realized that [Turn to page 91]

"What's that? A bank-book!
Where did it come from?"

Merely the
Door-Mat

A PROBLEM STORY

*Did You Ever Have
to Choose Between
Marriage and Mother?*

DID you ever make yourself an unpaid servant to the rest of your family, until they all took it for granted that that was your place in life, and just naturally expected you to keep on being that?

Did you ever devote yourself to the care of your mother or your father to such an extent that when your time came to be married you were expected to say "No" to your prospective husband, and to tell him that family ties would not let you?

Did you ever have to choose between marriage and "Mother?"

What are you going to do when your love for your mother clashes with your love for the man who is to become, or wants to become, your husband?

Sometimes you can fight tyranny—if you just have enough spunk. But when it is a case of this family love stuff, how are you going to fight it without being undutiful?

Of course it is all right for your sisters and brothers to marry or to leave home to pursue their chosen work, and go each his own way. But if you even suggest doing so yourself, after having made yourself the willing slave of the family while the younger children were growing up—well, how selfish! How inconsiderate and undutiful! And—what's to become of Mother? The others can have sweethearts and go to parties, but—well, someone has to stay with Mother, even if only to keep her company! And of course that means you, if you are kind-hearted. Or at least, in my own case, it meant me.

Being the oldest girl in a family of five girls and two boys, it was naturally expected of me to help take care of the younger ones from the time that I was six or seven years old. Oh, it seems as long as I can remember back. There is no use talking. A family like that, supposed to



be the ideal size, means an enormous amount of work for someone, and of course it is too much for Mother. And it is really necessary, when the children are small, for the oldest girl to do a part of the work. That is all right, or it was all right, and of course I was willing and glad to do it. One does like, though, to have the fact recognized.

WE WERE a very clanny family, and I loved my little brothers and sisters, just as I loved my father and my mother. Besides, at first it was interesting. In the way that any little girl feels important when she first dries the dishes or sweeps the floor or does any of the work of the grown-ups, so I felt pride in learning and doing so many of the things around the house. I have always been very fastidious, with a perfect passion for cleanliness, I could never bear to have my hands sticky or greasy from food. I could not stand spots on the table-cloth, or dirt on the floor. And the way it worked out was that I was always scrubbing and polishing. And my mother was amused and delighted. I was always washing the hands and faces of my little brothers and sisters, and I would even bring the little tots of the neighbors into our house, and wipe their noses and scrub their dirty little hands and faces for them. "Little mother," they used to call me. Well, that was me, all right.

As I grew older and more competent, so that I lent a hand in the cooking and even in the sewing, I took more pride in doing these things. It was a great relief to my mother; she liked my ambition and intelligence, and she praised me for my help. Of course it was not her idea by this praise to make me all the more a slave to the family, but it had that effect just the same. And let



Jim flushed as red as a beet, and all my sisters tried to speak at once:

"Hey, Brother Jimmy! Georgia has spilled the beans."

"When is it going to be?"

"Who is to be the best man?"

"Look how shy he is!"

And then I told Jim how it happened.

me tell you that a willing girl of eight or ten years is capable of doing most of the things around the house, except the heavy work such as washing, shaking rugs and like that. Most housework is child's play, anyway. I don't mean that it is not drudgery, or that it will not tire a woman out if she does too much of it. I mean that the demands upon the mind do not require a full grown intelligence. The mind of a child of ten is fully capable of doing most of the tasks about the house. But brains are needed in *managing* the house, I can tell you, and of course Mother did that. However, in time my brothers and sisters came not only to depend upon me for help but to expect it of me, as if that were my natural function in life.

When I was fifteen even the baby was about ready to start to school; in fact, the two youngest started at the same time. That meant that, besides myself, there were six of them to get dressed and breakfasted and on their way each morning. You will never know how much hustling it takes to get a bunch like that off to school—every morning—unless you have been through it. By now some of the older ones might have helped, in the same way that I helped, if they had wanted to. But they had always depended upon me. They just leaned upon Mother and myself, and could not even be depended upon to get themselves ready. Mother and I still had to brush their hair for them, see that they all had their breakfasts, make sure that they had clean handkerchiefs, that they put on rubbers on rainy days, and ask if they still had them when they came home—and all that.

But under this pressure I was unable to get myself ready for school in time, and I found myself rushing nervously, and still being late repeatedly. Then about this time Mother's health became so wretched that I had

to stay home to help her so often that it was not practical even to try to go to school any more. With a heavy heart I brought my things home from school one day and took my place permanently as the family's unpaid servant. Understand, I did this willingly and without resentment, just because it needed to be done. There was no other way. Mother was sorry. She said that perhaps next year she would be better and the other children would be older and could help, and would not need so much help, and then I could go back and finish school. And so I looked forward to going back to school and to the honor of graduating from high school.

I MIGHT say that my education was not wholly neglected, because I managed to do a little reading. I did not have much time, though, and sometimes I was too tired to read when I had the chance, but in the years I managed to find some good books. And I looked forward to going back to school. Unfortunately, that privilege never did become mine.

Life is just one thing after another. That following summer, as if Mother did not have family enough as it was, she again went through the perilous crisis of motherhood. But this time, I am sorry to say, it was with more tragic results. A prominent specialist was called in to assist, but the baby was born dead and Mother was a near invalid from that time on. That, of course, meant the end of school for me, and even of any hopes for it, since I was now well established in my job as chief cook and bottle-washer. I can see now that Florence and Cora might have taken turns in staying home a year, to let me finish school, but that never occurred to anyone, not even to myself.

Of course some of the others [Turn to page 112]

Embers of Hate

*In "solitary" one
loses all track
of the days, let
alone the hours
and minutes.*

*But over and
over my brain
kept repeating:*

"Be patient . . .

Wait . . . Some

day you'll be

free . . . And

then ——"



The woman broke the spell. With a flashing, wondering look at me,

THE deadening silence was broken suddenly by the echo of five dull and muffled strokes upon the bell in the prison tower. In two—three hours at most—the blistering heat, which had made my cell an inferno since sun-up, must give way to the breeze which night always coaxed from the river. Thank God, the accursed day was drawing to a close.

The sweat slithered down my forehead into my smarting eyes, blinding me. Shakily, I pulled myself from my cot and staggered to the barred door, hoping for a breath of cooler air from the slit of a window beyond.

With an oath I beat my clenched hands against the steel in rebellion. I would have given ten years of my life at that moment if my fingers had been within reach of the throat of the one whose treachery had caged me

like a wild beast. Then gasping, half crazed by my helplessness, I again sank upon my bed.

How long I sat, my fevered face between my hands, staring at the heat waves which still danced up and down from the floor, I did not know. In "solitary" one loses all track of days, let alone the hours and the minutes. But over and over my brain kept repeating; "Be patient . . . Wait . . . Some day you'll be free . . . And then——"

Finally a sound roused me from my stupor. There was a clang of bars, the rasping of a key in the corridor lock, a shuffling upon the cement. They were bringing my supper. I came to my feet expectantly. Yes, as the footsteps drew nearer I could hear it—the tinkle of ice. Trembling fingers passed across my parched lips.



she grasped Benson by the arm and led him stumbling to the cart.

The door of my cell swung wide. I did not look at Jim Macklam, the guard. His taunting, derisive smile always goaded me to frenzy. It was beyond him my gaze was focused, upon Old Jim, the red-jowled, white-haired trusty who bore the tray. But I did not notice the food; only the sweating pewter pitcher, with bits of ice floating at the top.

Eagerly I reached for it. But Macklam shoved me away. "Don't be a damned fool," he roared. "If you swallow that now it'll kill you. Eat something first."

"To hell with the food," I gasped; "it's the water I want." I made another try for the pitcher, only to be hurled back and firmly held.

"Listen you." Dully I realized Jim was speaking again. "Hold that rotten temper of yours. It got you

into solitary, and it'll send that drink out of here if you don't behave."

I lacked the strength to resist. But I looked over the guard's shoulder to where the trusty hung against the wall. His face seemed to have turned the color of a thing dead, his lips twitched. Then he caught my look. He placed a finger over his lips, shook his head and pointed to the tray.

In a flash my brain cleared. Prison instinct enabled me to read his message. But Macklam's suspicions must not be aroused. So, pretending to give way grudgingly, I drew myself from his grasp with: "You're right, Jim. Guess the heat drove me crazy. I'll be good. Not a drop, I promise, until I've eaten something."

ALL right," he nodded, motioning Joe to place the tray upon my stool. "Your word's the one good thing about you, Carlton. I'll trust you. Take your time and nurse the water. We won't be back till morning."

Like a man numbed with dope I sat crouching. The tray was within reach, but I didn't move. I sensed rather than heard the clang of my cell lock, the sluff of retreating footsteps, other sounds. Then silence again.

Ice? Water? I had forgotten both. It was the other thing which old Joe's gesture had told me was upon the tray which clutched and held me. There was a message from the outer world. I knew it. Some word smuggled to me by the "grapevine." In an agony of suspense I cowered. Would the news be good or would it add further to the hell of my imprisonment?

At last curiosity conquered. With twitching fingers I reached beneath the plates, the cup, the pitcher. Nothing! Then I tumbled the stack of buttered bread slices. Yes, there it was, between the lower two. A bit of folded paper which had made its way through to me in this isolated dungeon.

With a miser's grasp I seized my find. I staggered to the door, bent low where daylight still filtered through, spread the tiny sheet and read:

Have sold the mine. One hundred grand. Your half deposited in your own name in the National City, New York. Am making for Europe. Good-by and good luck.

Connor

Three times I went over the scrawl before I comprehended fully. Good, old, square pal. A thief, perhaps, but he hadn't forgotten me or his pledge. Fifty thousand dollars to be mine for the mere scratch of a pen! Fifty thousand dollars with which to run to earth the one who had sent me to this living hell! At last—but my laugh of triumph died in my throat. Misconduct had robbed me of my good behavior. Instead of being free in a month, two more years of prison stretched before me. Fury gripped. I drove my fist against my forehead again and again. "You

idiot; you mad, mad fool," I shrieked. Then something seemed to snap within my brain. I sprawled upon the floor, my face twitching, my body shaking from head to foot. A rushing torrent pounded in my ears—then all went black.

All was pitch dark when I regained consciousness. The fever was gone. My fingers still clutched the bit of paper from Connor. I pushed it inside my shoe, then located the pitcher. The water refreshed me, though the chill was gone. Next I ate, slowly, forcing all other thoughts temporarily from my mind.

THIRST and hunger satisfied, I pulled myself to my cot, hoping to obtain needed rest before considering the mighty problem which faced me. But sleep would not come. And, as I lay there staring into nothingness, I could not keep my thoughts from my black yesterdays, which, like a hideous panorama, passed before me in review.

Real love I never had known. My mother gave her life to bring me into the world. My father, a cold, hard business man, who had battled his way from poverty to a post as the controlling business and financial power in the New England city which was our home, was too occupied for the duties of parenthood. I was turned over to servants for rearing—to have my body kept well and strong; to be schooled. Apparently his only interest in me lay in the future. When I had reached a sufficient age to shoulder the burden of business, he planned to place me in one of his factories. I was to be taught from the ground, that I might take over his interests when he passed on.

His calculating mind schemed ever further. He had earned every dollar he possessed. I would have to do the same. So, from small boyhood, I was compelled to perform some service, at home or in his office, for a meagre dole of spending-money. The situation embittered me. He was far wealthier than the fathers of my playmates, yet I could share in few of their pleasures. And I was the shabbiest dressed among them.

When I was eighteen I was permitted to attend college. But only on condition that I worked to pay part of my way. I accepted the challenge, and held to my purpose for three years. Then the country was swept by panic. Great financial houses crashed. Factories by the thousands closed their doors. My father lost

millions. Worry brought on a stroke which sent him to his grave. When the wreckage of his affairs was cleared away, his once mighty fortune had shrunk to a few hundred thousands. They became mine by will.

What followed was to have been expected. Possessing a large sum of money for the first time in my life, I lost my head. I left school, with New York as my destination. Within three months I was the most conspicuous waster along its White Way. I drank to excess. I gambled. Acquaintances robbed and swindled me. But I shunned the women; I knew nothing of them. I feared them.

Of all the men I met, only the friendships of James Connor and Kent Benson held. Connor was a professional gambler. Those who disliked him hinted that under other names he was known to the police. But he played fair with me, even tried to make me realize that I was throwing my life away. But I refused to heed the old man's advice.

Benson, tall, handsome, always immaculately groomed,



was different. None appeared familiar with his past, but many shunned him. I realized he was selfish, with few scruples. But still I clung to him. For he taught me how to live his life; the life which began at midnight and lasted till the dawn. He possessed but little money of his own, but I willingly kept him in funds—even shared my apartment with him.

It was nearly two years after I began my profligate career that I learned from my bankers that I had about reached the end of my resources. This came about when Connor came to me to borrow \$10,000. He admitted frankly he had been engaged in an enterprise which soon would set the police upon his trail, and stated he was about to start for the West under an alias. He wanted the money to purchase an interest in a mine with whose latent possibilities he long had been familiar. In a few years, he assured me, it would be worth ten times its current value. He promised me one-half the profits upon

its sale. I agreed. When I went to obtain the money I found I had less than \$50,000 remaining. But I kept my pledge to Connor, accepting no bond but his word.

Then began my greatest folly.

I met Belle Stanton, a music hall singer; beautiful, sensuous, mysterious, and clever as sin itself. She had returned from England, whither she had gone three years previous, following a quarrel with Benson. He introduced us. I learned her past, but it did not matter. For the first time in my life I had encountered a woman I wanted. I refused to believe that Benson had the right to assert a claim upon her. I was certain I was in love; hoped I could persuade her to marry me. And that, I felt, gave me the right to try to win her.

She met my advances more than half way. For she had learned of my reputation as a spender, and knew full well the limit of Benson's resources. He was furious. There were quarrels between us, but no open break. For I still was his banker. With more experience I would have realized my danger. His kind never parted without a struggle with anything they wanted—particularly a woman. Gratitude for what I had done for him would count for nothing in the circumstances. It was inevitable that he should scheme to get rid of me.

And conditions favored him. My money went fast to satisfy Belle's demands. I was skirting the edge of impending poverty. At my wits' end, I tried to be less lavish in my expenditures upon her. She sensed the truth and promptly began avoiding me. To Benson's queries I replied we had quarreled. With his cunning brain he at once began planning to create a situation which would make the breach permanent. But I never suspected he would stoop to deliberate treachery.

One night he learned that Belle was in a private dining-room of a fashionable resort, with a wealthy Chilian. He found me in a gambling house, losing heavily. He told me of Belle's whereabouts—jeered at me for permitting her to escape me. Stung to unreasoning anger, I made for the place, Benson following. I rushed in upon her, striking wildly at her companion without explanation. She fled as he drew a revolver to defend himself. Benson remained at the open doorway. In the mad struggle which followed, the weapon was discharged by accident, dropping my antagonist at my feet—dead. A cry of horror went up from those who had been attracted by the sounds of combat.

I WAS too dazed to act for myself. Benson succeeded in getting me into the open. Placing me in a cab, he thrust a roll of bills into my hand, ordered the driver to rush me to the Grand Central Terminal, and advised me to escape while there was time. Two detectives arrested me as I leaped from the cab at the station.

My trial was a seven days' sensation. Travis, my attorney, whom I had known in college, saved me from a verdict of murder. By producing witnesses who had seen the Chilian and myself struggling for possession of the pistol, he got me off with a ten years' sentence for manslaughter. Had he been able to produce Benson, [Turn to page 102]



Connor, already unfastening his shirt, turned wondering eyes upon me.
"But I don't understand," I gasped. "Why did they shoot you?"

Fangs

*I Had Defied the Gods
and the Signs
of India. And Now I
Would See Blood
Before Another Dawn!*

*The Conclusion
of the Story of Superstition and
Adventure and Sacrifice*

AS THE daughter of a British Army colonel, I came in close contact with the lives and superstitions of the browns of India. One of these superstitions is that if one looks through glass at a blood-red, full moon, he will see blood before dawn. At such barbaric ignorance I laughed—until—

The announcement in Surrey that I was going to marry George Carlyon, rich and of promising career, didn't seem to be the damper that I had expected, when it came to cutting off Billy Travers, also of the British Army. And I loved Billy when I became the wife of another man.

Billy had been commanding a regiment in India a year when George was sent there to hold a responsible post. It was not long until Billy and I were face to face, our hearts the same as of old.

It was the third night after George left for a hunting trip that the music of Chand, our Hindoo valet, caused me to glance through the window at a blood-red moon. That superstition! And on that same night, Billy came to see me. He avoided all sentimentality, and the constant interruptions of Chand seemed to make him uneasy. It was after I had dismissed Chand for the night that he dared to break my orders and announce, "The Sahib! He come back."

Billy had stepped into my boudoir, which had no exit, and I was face to face with my husband. The general atmosphere and a cigar stub were sufficient for him to know that someone occupied the adjoining room. Failing to make me admit it, he ordered Chand to bring in a

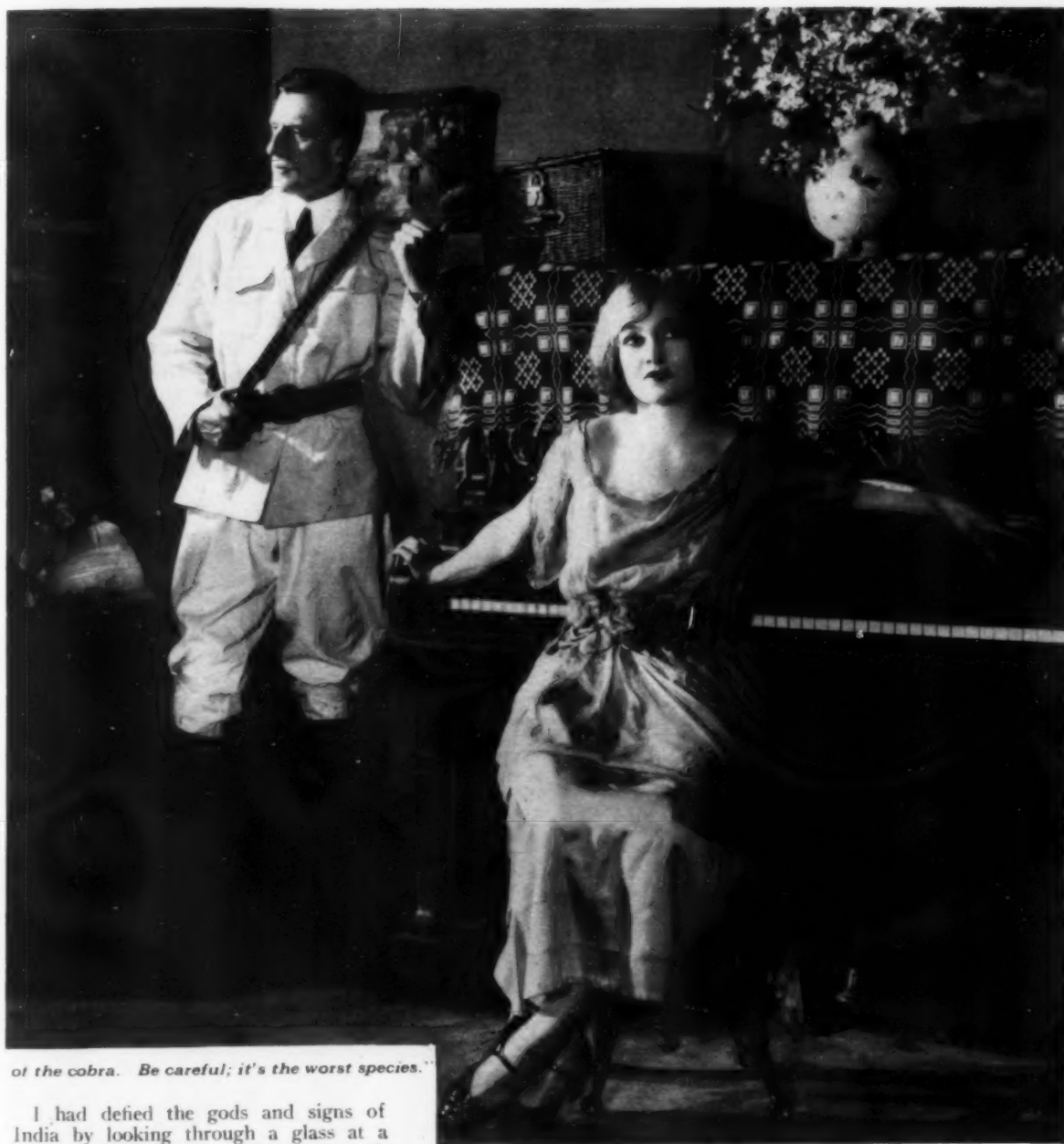


"Here, Chand, a little present for you . . . a fire specimen

basket, while he walked to the mantelpiece and took down a crucifix.

MY HANDS against a holy crucifix seemed sacrilege enough. But it was not to be enough. Carlyon, my husband, towered over me, still insisting that I swear on the cross that there was no one in my boudoir. Stricken by an overwhelming fear, I dropped my eyes from Carlyon's during the agony of hesitation which seemed to damn me more and more in his heart. As if fated, my gaze fell upon the basket that blocked the one and only way to the room where Billy Travers was hiding. I shuddered at the thought of the venomous snake coiled in that basket.

"Come, Norah. Your last chance, or the cobra goes into that room. Do you swear on the crucifix the room is empty?" His voice was hideous, like the yelping of the jackals; the cries of the flying foxes; the screeching of the Hindoos on an Indian night.



of the cobra. Be careful; it's the worst species."

I had defied the gods and signs of India by looking through a glass at a blood-red, full moon. There was only one way now to keep myself from seeing blood before the dawn of another day. And that way lay in drawing the vengeance of my own God down upon me by swearing to a deliberate lie on that sacred emblem.

YES—yes—of course—I—I swear it! Will that satisfy you?" I answered, steeling myself as if certain a thunderbolt would strike me for my sacrilege. The cross clattered to the floor as I finished the last words. My husband bent down and replaced it on the mantelpiece, a strange smile upon his stern face.

"All right, Norah," he returned. A note of weariness crept into the hardness of his voice. For the first time I realized how drawn and haggard he looked. "I'm sorry for all the dramatics, dear, but somehow my nerves are upset tonight . . . I've had a deucedly long ride.

It was beastly hot in the jungle, feverishly so. I—I'm tired, very tired."

Confidence came to me at the signs of his wilting. It is always like that I suppose when a woman feels that the man is weakening. I turned to Carlyon, putting my arms around him:

"Poor old boy! You look quite done up. Your room is ready for you."

"No—not yet, somehow—I feel too tired to sleep. Play me some music. Sing me something."

"But, it's so late, dear, and—"

"Do what I ask you!" The old note of power was in his tones again. I trembled at the suggestion of his returning strength. "Go on. I may never ask you a favor again," he ended.

"Why, dear, what do you mean?" I asked, my own

voice faltering as I watched him sit down and twist his hands.

A terrible strain was overshadowing me. I felt like screaming. I wanted to die. Already my lie was searing its way through my breast like a flame. Soon it would burst through in a red spurt. Then my husband would know the terrible truth! Yet, the thought of Billy Travers, trapped in my boudoir, innocent of any real wrongdoing with me, spurred me on to a last stand. I shrugged my shoulders as if bored at having to carry out my husband's demands, and went to the piano.

I BEGAN to play, nervously; Carlyon had the nerve to say my touch was exquisitely perfect. I turned at his words. He was pouring himself another drink, his eyes focused on the basket of cobra. Suddenly his hand snapped out, and he rang the bell. The jangle of the thing almost shattered my nerves. My fingers strayed aimlessly over the keys.

"Go on, Norah. I feel better already. Play some more. That was pretty!"

"I'm glad you like it, dear," I answered, hypocritically. Mechanically, I began to play "Plaisir d'Amour." Between the chords and notes I heard his footsteps. Glancing over my shoulder, I discovered Carlyon standing at the entrance of the tea-room. He was pulling back the curtains. His voice reached me:

"Ah! This was always our favorite theme. Do you remember when we heard the gondoliers play it by moonlight in Venice? Remember the swish of sleeping waters?"

A swishing sort of sound came to me, but it was not a sound of the waters of Venice. It was the cobra

moving in the basket. I dared not attempt an answer, so he went on:

"How happy we were then! Chico's hand repeated it at Armentieres—how we revelled in it!" he finished, as the last note melted away from my frantic fingers.

A silence followed, broken only by the night sounds of India and the swishing of the cobra. Somehow the high sounds of night seemed vague and far away, lost beneath the uncoiling and coiling suggestion of the snake. My husband commenced speaking again:

"One more thing, Norah. Play 'The Kashmiri Song.' It is so—so apropos!"

I knew the thing by heart. Turning my back, I began playing again, knifed by the knowledge that Carlyon was only toying with me. His voice, always rich in song, followed my notes.

*"Pale hands, pinked tipped, like Lotus buds that float
On those cool waters where we used to dwell,
I would have rather felt you round my throat,
Crushing out life—"*

Carlyon stopped abruptly with these words, taking up the song only after I had played another bit. Then he went on:

*"Pale hands I loved beside the Shalimar,
Where are you now! Who lies beneath your spell?
Whom do you lead on Rapture's roadway, far,
Before you agonize them in farewell?"*

ALTHOUGH he stopped singing for a second time. I neither dared stop playing, nor turn around, until a snapping noise filled the room. My heart almost stopped beating. Ice and fire [Turn to page 107]



\$1,000 Cash Prize

EVERY MONTH

For the Smart Set Girl on the Cover

THE first SMART SET GIRL cover will appear on the September issue. Hundreds of girls have submitted their photographs for consideration, and a great deal of favorable comment has been made on the idea of choosing our covers from among our own readers' pictures.

And because we want to make it more than worth while, because we want to help everyone we can, we are going to give one thousand dollars cash each month for three months to the girl whose picture is chosen.

We are holding hundreds of pictures now, and each month we will pick one of them. If your picture is not here, send it

at once to the Art Editor, with the answers to the questions in the above insert. We want to consider everyone we can, every month. It isn't just one chance; it's one every month. And if the covers are sufficiently popular we may decide to extend the time.

To have your portrait painted by *Henry Clive* is sufficient inducement, but when we add the opportunity of having it put on the cover of a great magazine where hundreds of thousands of people will examine it; when we promise to display it in both Chicago and in New York so that people may examine it, and then have it framed and presented to you, —it is a prize worth seeking.

And to have a thousand dollars in cash given as a means to help you start a career if you want one, or a bank account if you don't, makes

just about as complete and attractive an offer as has ever been made by a magazine.

IT IS a very daring thing for Smart Set to do—choosing unknown girls just because we believe in the folks who read our magazine. But we are doing daring things all the time. And because we want to be a little more daring than usual we have been trying our best to make this contest too attractive to be overlooked.

It is an amazing opportunity to attract the attention of the theatrical and movie worlds. Someone is bound to win fame and fortune by taking advantage of the opportunity. We are going

to do our best to help. Maybe someone from your town will be on the cover of Smart Set this year—perhaps it will be YOU, or your sister, or sweetheart, or daughter.

THE contest will close September 1st, and all pictures must be in the hands of the Art Editor at that time. Mr. Clive and Miss Louella Parsons, movie editor of the New York American, and Howard Chandler Christy, will assist the editors in choosing the covers each month for three months—and if you give us the reception we expect, the time may be extended.

We are striving every month to give you a new feature, and I think this cover contest has been interesting to us all. Next month we will have something startling to tell you.

—THE EDITOR.

Questionnaire

Name.....

Complete address.....

When were you born?..... Where?.....

Typical American type?..... Spanish?..... French?..... Other?.....

Please give: (a) Height (without shoes)..... (b) Weight (lightly dressed).....

(c) Color of eyes..... (d) Color of hair..... Bobbed?.....

(e) Complexion (Dark or Light).....

Will your parents (or guardians) give their permission for SMART SET to use your picture if you are chosen by the artist?.....

Are you willing to cooperate with us to make this plan succeed?.....

Three's a Crowd

"There are Weak-Kneed Women and Weak-Kneed Men, and There are Dominating Women and Dominating Men," Will Says. "And if You Don't Pair them Right, the Happy Home Will Become a Battle-Ground."



NO MAN can ever possibly understand a woman. That's what they say.

In the main, I think it is true. And yet I have noticed that when a woman sets out to give a man a piece of her mind, she usually makes it possible for him to understand her very, very well.

However, I think that I have learned one or two things about women—and about married life. And yet, perhaps I am wrong. Perhaps what I have learned only applies to some, and is not true of women generally. Let's see what you think.

One reason why men cannot understand women, to my mind, is because of this old tradition of the clinging vine. That was part of the trouble in my own married life, as you will see. It's a funny thing that even while admitting the impossibility of understanding this great mystery and conundrum—woman—men say in the same breath that she is a clinging vine, just as if they know all about her. They say she is a clinging vine, naturally attaching herself to the sturdy oak, and finding in that relationship the ideal and happy combination. Well, as to the happy combination—perhaps!

The trouble with the theory is that some of these

"clinging vines" are altogether too sturdy to enter into this pretty and poetic scheme of things.

What I found out was that this sturdiness of the oak counts for nothing. I started out—Heaven help me!—with the assumption that a woman wants strength in a man. Naturally! Because she wants protection. She wants a man who can provide. The more strength and ability he has, the better he serves as the head of a family. And that's why she loves him. Theoretically, yes.

But the trouble is that women are different, just as men are different. There are clinging vines in both sexes. There are weak-kneed women and weak-kneed men, and there are dominating women and dominating men. If a docile man marries a dominating woman, then she "wears the pants," and peace prevails. If a dependent type of woman marries a dominating type of man, again everything will go smoothly. The two become one, and he is that one, or she, in the other case.

BUT put together in this w.k. yoke of matrimony a couple of sturdy oaks, two dominating spirits, and what do you get? There is only one conclusion, and that is war. The anticipated happy home becomes a



*The two of them
hit it off to-
gether from the
beginning.*

cares nothing for him. All he means is a source of money. She doesn't care for him because he doesn't need her. And she doesn't need him in a personal way, so long as she has the comforts and luxuries of life and can enjoy herself as she chooses. But, did you ever notice, so long as he is poor and working hard, battling against handicaps, hardly able to secure even the necessities of life, she sticks to him, stands by him, stands up for him? Yes, and continues to love him.

It has been said that when poverty comes in through the door, love flies out through the window. Maybe—sometimes. But mostly those are the conditions in which women stick. Love flies out of the window of a beautiful Rolls-Royce sedan, or something like that, much more quickly.

I confess that I was always a headstrong type of person. As a boy I was always captain of the ball team. When I wanted to go swimming, or climb trees, or go fishing, or steal watermelons, that was what all the boys did.

Yet, there was one stubborn lad who didn't always want to follow my ideas. That was Roy Reynolds. Very conceited fellow. He wanted to decide everything. If we would not all do what he wanted to do, he would not play at all. Sometimes he and I wanted to play the same thing, as in the marble season, or baseball season, and we would all play together. At other times, he would have some idea of his own, and we would split. Some of the boys would join him, much to my disgust. But Roy lived in our town only a couple of years, when we were ten to twelve years old, and then his folks moved away. I did not see him again until we met in the city, years after I was married.

I married Alice Butler because I thought she was just the girl I wanted. Mutual

attraction? You bet. That was the reason for our coming together. I felt it the first time we met. I suppose she did, too. We just naturally took to each other and before we woke up we were married—through mutual attraction. But it developed that in so many things our tastes were not alike.

I WILL admit that in some ways I neglected Alice. I was ambitious. I was determined that I was going to know more about my branch of law than any other man in the state, or in the country, perhaps. I went into every case exhaustively, thoroughly, partly to learn. I did more work on them than other lawyers would. And so I have been successful. But my work often kept me downtown evenings and Saturday afternoons, even Sundays, when Alice naturally expected my companionship.

Also, my work was a strain upon me. It left me tired. And because I was tired I was not the best companion when I did spend a little time at home. Oh, I'll admit that there was fault enough on my side, mostly on my

battle-ground. I have studied life both as a lawyer and as a married man, analyzing many cases besides my own, and the thing is as clear to me as anything that I know.

Another word, before I go on with my story, about this business of a woman's instinctive love of strength. I found that when my attitude was that of strength, when I was the master, my wife hated me. When I was weak and broken, she loved me. That sounds queer, doesn't it? Isn't that just like the so-called inconsistencies with which the weaker sex is charged? Wait a moment! Did I say weaker sex? Well, which is the weaker sex? For one thing, women live longer than men, on the average. Census figures and life insurance figures prove it.

Let me ask you. Did you ever notice that people get divorces only when they are prosperous? No, it isn't just because people have to have money in order to defray the expenses of a divorce case. It goes deeper than that. When a man is prosperous it means that he is enjoying a period of strength—and, therefore, his wife

side, and Alice had plenty to complain of. However, when I had a little time for relaxation, I wanted real relaxation. I didn't want a lecture on the culture of the Babylonians. I didn't want art with a capital "A" or any other type of improving my mind and esthetic development. I wanted simple, primitive, low-brow relaxation. And thus our tastes did not agree.

The result was that I was always dragging Alice off to musical comedy when she wanted to go to the opera. I would take her with me to vaudeville, which she said she hated, when she wanted to see some play by the Theatre Guild, or some high-brow bunch. She once got me to go and see something by Ibsen, and I went to sleep, and she was disgusted. That ended that. I preferred good jazz to symphony orchestras, but she said there was no good jazz.

However, Alice naturally was crazy about these concerts because she was a wonderful violin player herself—best player I ever heard. Finally she said that she had taken up the violin study again with some famous professor with a big Russian name or something, and was going to make it a profession. I told her to go to it, and then forgot that she was taking it so seriously. I wonder if I am making clear the situation between us, how there was a complete clash between our tastes and interests. But all the time she was a lovely young woman, and I was proud of her.

HOWEVER, every ship must have its captain. You cannot conceive of a ship on which every deck-hand does just whatever he wants to do. Someone must have the power of decision. And on the matrimonial bark, when there is a difference of opinion, someone must decide. Yet, in the very nature of things, the man is the head of his household. He supports it. He is responsible for everything. And so he must have authority. Naturally, his wife must stand by him, knowing that he will of course, do his best to make her happy and protect her and provide for her. He may make mistakes, but everyone does that. But he must be the captain of the ship.

Unfortunately, Alice would never accept that version of things. She was always ready to fight, to make a fuss. She wanted to decide things. For instance, she made a fuss when I bought a new roadster, because she wanted a coupé. To my notion, a man who wants a pleasure car, just for relaxation, will find the real sport in a roadster. I am indoors so much, anyway. Oh, well, there is no use in going over that argument. But that was the way it was. Always an argument, and I had argument enough downtown in my law business. Of course I made my own decisions, as a man must, but there was always that resistance to every move I made, that meant a strain, a tax upon my nerves. And then she would call me a brute, and tell me how selfish I was, and inconsiderate, and that



Was that really me? I started to laugh, but that hurt too much.

it was my duty to provide for her happiness. Of course it was. And I wanted to. But I would ask her if she thought I could bring her happiness on a silver platter? Besides, she had her duty to me, too, as it seemed to me. She did not consider the strain of my work.

Well, into this situation there walked one day my old friend and boyhood enemy, Roy Reynolds. I met him downtown in business. Indeed, I handled a case for him. He was much improved, grown into a fine-looking fellow, athletic, of good address and personality, and all that. You can never tell what a boy will grow into. I had not liked him as a boy, and I was not quite sure that I liked him now, and yet there was no reason why I shouldn't. At least we were friendly, if not friends, had lunch together several times, and I thought we would become friends. Our boyhood disagreements—they were silly, and far away. Roy Reynolds was all right, I said to myself, and one day I had him come home with me to dinner, and to meet Alice.

THE two of them hit it off together from the very beginning. Alice was glad to meet an old school-boy chum of mine, and all that. And—God save me!—his tastes were the same as her own. All of a sudden we found out that he played the piano, then she got out her violin—and they were at it. I said to myself that they would probably see a lot of each other, and I was not mistaken. But she was lonesome, and why not?

Roy was a good pianist—I'll say that for him. He was a pretty good all-round man, just as he had been good in games as a boy, a good ball pitcher, good swimmer, and so on. I now found that he could trim me in billiards, in bowling, and in golf. Of course he must have had a lot of practice in these things, you understand, while I seldom played at any of them. But he had good control of his hands, what they call good coordination, and lots of strength, and he played the piano as well as he

did anything else, or better. But he still had his wilful nature. He would pick out the pieces that he and Alice would play together, and the funny part of it was, to me, that she would let him make these decisions, though she never wanted me to decide anything. Well, I didn't quite like that phase of it.

The upshot of it all was that Roy commenced to see us a great deal, or at least he commenced to see her a great deal. I would often be hard at work downtown so that he would find Alice alone. And they would go over their music. Of course, that was my own fault, and I could not say anything about it, though I didn't like it. Jealous? Certainly not. Or at least I would not have admitted it. But before long their mutual artistic interests were such that Alice would go out with him to art exhibitions and symphony concerts and recitals—in short, to all those places where I never wanted to go.

Of course I was always invited. Looking back at it now, I will not say that Roy had a single dishonorable thought. They had plenty of mutual interests without that. But at the time it seemed to me after a while that it was rather a clever game. Reynolds would invite the two of us to go somewhere, knowing that I would not want to go. And then Alice would accept the invitation for both of us, and then I would tell her to go on without me. You can see, it *did* look like a clever game. But what could I say? I told them that I didn't mind, and I told myself that I didn't, even though down in my heart I disliked it far more than I would admit, even to myself.

Finally, one evening, my "subconscious mind" broke loose—something I thought would never happen to me.

I arrived home fairly early, but tired and cross. I felt just like going somewhere for a good laugh. I looked over the paper and found that there was a

new "edition" of the Follies, just the relaxation that I needed. But Alice spoke first, and asked me if I didn't want to go along to see some famous Russian dancers. She had made a date for us with Mr. Reynolds. Now, I like dancing with some joy in it—such as they have in the Follies. And some Russian dancers I once saw took it too seriously, though they had wonderful technique, of course. Art with a capital "A" again.

"Nix," I said, "you are going with me tonight, to see the Follies."

"But how about Mr. Reynolds?"

"I should worry about him. Your Mr. Reynolds can come along to the Follies."

It did not occur to me until afterward that the situation was just like our boyhood play, in which I told everybody what game we would have next. And I forgot that if Roy did not happen to want to play the same thing he would not play at all. Of course, that would suit him perfectly now, if Alice would take sides against me.

"My Mr. Reynolds?" she said, taking me up on that little thing. "Why *my* Mr. Reynolds? Surely, Will, you're not so foolish as to be getting jealous."

"*Me* jealous?" I said, with perhaps a little bit of a sneer. "Preposterous. Why should I be jealous?"

WELL, no reason at all, but I didn't like the way you said that."

And then I realized, all at once, that what I had said, in that little way, with that little one word, had betrayed my feelings, not only to her, but to myself. Hang it, in spite of myself, I *was* jealous. A thing that I had often been sure I would never be. And it was torture. I hated Roy. He was the same hateful little devil that he had been back in my school-days. I hated him for his superior ways. I hated him even for his ability, in so many lines. He was a sales-manager, and a most successful one, with talents besides. And when I faced the presumption that he was now probably trying to take my wife away from me, I fairly boiled inwardly. But I would not let on to her.

"Well, it is immaterial

[Turn to page 116]



"Have you had enough?" he asked coolly. And there was not a mark on him.

The First Prize Story in

What Happened to Me at MIDNIGHT

*This Is the First of
the Series of Thrillers
Which Will Be Run
in SMART SET*



WHEN I stood before the superintendent of the B— Hospital, taking the Florence Nightingale pledge, little did I dream that within a year's time I would be branded as a murderess. Nevertheless, on the sixth of April, 1924, my brain seemed to paralyze when I read the burning headlines on the front page of the local papers:

LOCAL NURSE STUDENT KILLS PATIENT IN STRUGGLE

I had been on day duty for some time, and several of my patients were quite seriously ill. Caring for them, I was naturally very tired.

It was on the first of April; I was sleeping soundly in the nurses' home when I was aroused by the night supervisor, who told me to get into a uniform and go on night duty in Ward Five. Miss Nash, the nurse whom I was to relieve, had an acute attack of appendicitis, and it was necessary to operate immediately. I dressed and went on duty in this ward, the American Surgical Ward, which was for men exclusively.

For five nights all went along much better than one could expect for a ward of thirty-two men, all confined to bed. There were none who were seriously ill, however.

It was during my second night on duty when Mr. Thomas was admitted to my care. Mr. Thomas was suffering from two bullet wounds in his chest, which made an immediate operation necessary. The doctor knew that it would be impossible for him to recover, and ordered morphine in one-quarter grain doses when the patient was suffering. The doses were left to the judgment of the nurse in charge, because we all knew that morphine, or

any other narcotic, for that matter, was not to be given within four-and-a-half hours of the preceding dose.

I never had the slightest cause to fear any of my patients, as some nurses on night duty do. Owing to the quietness there, and the stillness in the dead of night, many of the nurses have been frightened. It seems as if everyone around were dead, and you were left in utter darkness to watch over them. A creepy feeling, to be sure; nevertheless, it is interesting.

One night at the dinner table, we were telling of our various experiences.

"Say, Josey," one of the nurses was saying, "how would you like to awaken from a doze some midnight, and find old man Thomas, with his grisly hands clutching your neck?"

"Now, Pinkey, don't be so finicky. I doubt very much if the poor man could ever get out of bed, he is so weak."

IS THAT so?" Pinkey said. "In his delirium today he got up and was promenading all over the place when we discovered him way out in the hall. He overpowered three of us, and before we could get him to go back, we were obliged to get two of the orderlies to help us, so he is not so weak as you may think he is. You had better carry a club with you tonight. He is as delirious as a bat, and getting stronger all the time. If you crave excitement, you are in for your share of it tonight. Let me tell you, kid, the fun is all yours. And, take it from me, I don't care for it." This said, she folded her napkin and left the table.

After she had gone, I couldn't help but worry about what she had told me. Turning to the girl on my right,

the Midnight Contest



Midnight Contest Winners

\$100 Prize

Hazel Pilkenton, Charleston, W. Va.

Five \$50 Prizes

Elizabeth O. Riley, Pawtucket, R. I.

Bertha N. Harris, Shinglehouse, Pa.

Marius Perron, Laredo, Tex.

Helen Lukens Gaut, Pasadena, Calif.

Frederick H. James, Brooklyn, N. Y.

I said, "Lucy, what is Pinkey talking about, anyway?"

"Well, Josey," Lucy answered, "Mr. Thomas is pretty bad, and he is really very strong. He just got it into his head today that his wife was in the reception room, that we would not allow her in to see him, and he was trying to get through the hall."

"Do you think I will have any trouble with him tonight, Lucy?"

"Well, Josey, that is hard to say. When I came off duty at three this afternoon, he was resting better; however, I would advise you to keep an eye on him tonight."

Lucy was a splendid nurse and it was her affirmation that gave me courage to go to my nightly task, so at nine-thirty I put all the lights out, answered a few bells, and retired to my office to make up my charts for nine o'clock. My office was off Ward Seven, just opposite Ward Five, only the door could not be seen from the office. I was with my back to the door, so that the light fell on my paper better. At eleven o'clock I had all my work completed, and made my hourly rounds. All was well—Mr. Thomas sleeping soundly, still under the influence of the morphine administered at nine o'clock.

I returned to the office, checked my buzzer, and sat down at the desk to write. Oh, how the hours seemed to drag, and at every noise, no matter how small, I would jump! I'll admit that I was somewhat nervous, but

why? All my patients were asleep—perfectly rational—and Mr. Thomas was still under the influence of the morphine.

It had been a very strenuous week for me, and I was just about all in—dead tired. I could hardly keep my eyes open, and it must have been about a quarter to twelve when I dropped my head over the desk and dozed off.

It is the custom for all the night nurses to gather in the diet kitchen at midnight.

Suddenly I found myself sitting bolt upright, having been startled by some noise. I glanced at my wrist watch. Twelve o'clock! I had slept fifteen minutes. Had a buzzer awakened me? I glanced up. No, not any registered. But perhaps it was the buzzer on the dumb-waiter, calling me to lunch. Anyway, it was time, and I was hungry.

I began to straighten up at my desk, pulled my sweater up closer about my neck, and started toward the door.

Suddenly, a low moan reached my ears. I was paralyzed with fright and stood still, straining my ears trying to locate where the sounds came from. There the sound was again, but it didn't sound like a moan this time. Something more dreadful, more frightful, like a horse breathing—a labored, difficult breathing, as if a patient were dying. It couldn't have come from the ward, for I had closed the door and no [Turn to page 89]

*Suddenly the door
began to open slowly,
steadily. A long,
brown bony hand
came creeping up
the frame of the
door.*

Maria's Story

I took her hand in mine—that beautiful hand of Silvio's. The last time I had touched it was when I nursed her and kissed her good-by in the hospital, and felt her tiny fingers grip mine. What memories they brought back!



... with a silent entreaty that Silvio could look down and see us.

AND we shall go to America to make our fortune!" We had come, my musician husband and I, leaving Italy just after our marriage.

Those first three years! Our dreams of a baby Silvio and a baby Maria came true, but a dreadful disease took away my husband after a long illness, and we were left at the mercy of others. Another baby was coming, so the Home took my other children.

John Street, a young lawyer, also from our country, had given Silvio a decent burial, because of his connection with the Musician's Union.

My baby was a girl. Although I was given very tender care at the hospital, I was depressed by the thought of the two children in the Home, and now my baby, to feed and clothe.

Just when I was praying for some solution to my problem, a call came from a wealthy family wanting to adopt my baby. I thought it a God-send, and for baby's sake, I let them take her away . . . and there started the longing for my baby, the source of all my suffering since then.

Soon I secured work as a nurse to another baby about the age of mine. This lasted about a year, and I saved some money. Soon after I went back to my old trade, making artificial flowers—with hopes of taking my chil-

dren from the Home—John Street came back into my life.

He decided that I should make my home with one of his clients—a Mrs. Bonchi. It was here that Street's attentions grew and grew. He told me of his love for me, but I evaded the subject of marriage.

The Conclusion

I FELT faint and dizzy. It was happiness that almost made me swoon. Yes, I was overcome with joy.

I clutched John's hand, and smiled as I said: "Do you mean it, John? Would you want my children to live with us?"

"I hadn't thought of another thing, my darling. How could I think of you without thinking of your children?"

"But the expense?" I faltered. I knew he was having a hard time and that clients weren't stopping traffic in front of his little office.

"Leave that to me," he bravely said.

"Are you sure we wouldn't be too much of a burden, John—that we wouldn't keep you from getting ahead?" For here was a man with the ambition rarely born in the human mind.

"I'll tell you one thing, Maria: if you don't marry me, my career will be nothing. For if I can't live with you

There hadn't been so much Italian spoken in our house since I could remember.



and have you for my own, my life will be nothing. Anything which I ever do or any money which I may ever make will be for you and the children."

My head was swimming. I became almost hysterical, and felt that I must burst out giggling like a schoolgirl. Then I said, "Won't you please ask me again?"

"Maria, darling. Do you mean it? Will you marry me?"

"Yes, John, I will marry you," and pressed the hand which was still holding mine across the table.

I don't remember much about the rest of that supper. All I do remember is coming home in the cab—John's lips on mine and my head on his shoulder.

The next morning when I told Mrs. Bonchi, I did so rather apologetically. I felt disloyal in leaving this good woman who had taken me into her heart and home. She hugged me and she laughed and then the tears came into her eyes.

"You foolish child," she said. "I've just been waiting for this to happen so that I could accept my niece's invitation to spend the rest of my days with her in her home near Naples."

"Oh, Mrs. Bonchi! Just think! Now I can be entirely happy. I felt so hurt to think of leaving you."

"We'll just talk things over with John today, dear

child, and arrange about the wedding, which, of course, you will have right here, and then, when you are all settled in your own little home, you can help me close up and get me off to the old country. You should be a very happy woman, Maria. John is a splendid man and will make you a good husband. I expect to be very proud of that young man some day. We'll hear from him. He's got it in him."

YES," I said, "I have everything in the world . . ." I stopped. I had almost said "but my baby." Mrs. Bonchi knew. She put her arm around me and caressingly said: "Yes, dear Maria."

In a month John and I were married. My blessed children were in the front row of the church with Mrs. Bonchi. And my old neighbor—dressed up as I could never imagine in my wildest dreams—sat on the other side of them, smiling at me as she would her own daughter. I wondered if it was that I had now "a good man to pay the rent," which gave her that complacent expression.

We drove home from the church and sat down to our wedding breakfast. Mrs. Bonchi insisted upon bringing the kind woman who had befriended me in my deepest trouble. To see her pleasure made that day even happier for me—if that were possible.

At that time John was in the midst of a case. He couldn't get away from town for a wedding-trip, and besides, that would have been expensive. So we got on a boat and went to Coney Island.

I had never been there. To me it was a more wonderful place than any of the great capitals of Europe, which I have since visited.

What a day! We came home in the twilight and went to our own little flat which was waiting for us. Mrs. Bonchi even had a delicious supper waiting, with an iced bottle of Italian champagne.

In a week the children came. How well I remember the first night they were with us, when I heard their prayers and tucked them in!

I stood at the door and looked at them in their little white beds. I was happy—but there was just room by those two beds for another little crib. If my baby were only in that! Where was she?

However, in a year there was a little baby in that crib—"John Street, Jr."—and John Street, Sr. was the happiest man in the whole world.

Thank God, I had done something to repay him for his wonderful kindness. For no man living ever was

prouder of being a father, or loved his wife more for elevating him to that distinguished state, than my dear husband. And the children! How they loved our little boy!

"A live dolly," insisted Little Maria, and was always by my side when I gave him his bath.

"Dolly, nothing," argued young Silvio, who was never far away at these times, either. "He'll be a base-ball player and play on my team pretty soon."

SILVIO had his base-ball player and Maria had her wish. In a year she had her live dolly, for a dear little baby girl claimed a place in our happy household.

A baby girl! How I loved her—that tiny girl. It was almost like having my other baby girl—the one I had known for such a little while.

But no. They really didn't look alike. I had not forgotten one small detail of that precious little face which was burned into my memory—never to be effaced.

Life went well with us. John was doing splendidly. Mrs. Bonchi's prophecy came true. He joined a good firm and was doing the court work. He was a promising trial lawyer. Everybody told me that. His name often

appeared in the papers now, and he was taking an active interest in politics, in the new district to which we had moved—oh, yes, we graduated from the flat and lived in a beautiful apartment with an elevator in the building, and John insisted upon my having a maid.

Our home was a real home. What happy evenings we had with John at the piano, young Silvio playing on his father's violin for us—for Silvio played well and loved it!

The violin always lay on the piano. There were never any jealous thoughts in John's mind of my former marriage. There are not many men who would have displayed the broad understanding which was John's, regarding my youthful romance. This was one of the qualities which made me love and respect him with a depth like that of the sea.

He always went with me to the cemetery, fully realizing that it tore out my heart—for when I went to Silvio's grave my baby was always in my mind. Sometimes it seemed as if it would have

been easier if there had been a little grave by Silvio's. But when that thought came to me I banished it, reproaching myself for being selfish, and comforting my heartache by feeling that all was well with my child whom I did not know.

"Maria," said John, on one of these visits, as he stood by the grave with his arm around me. "I didn't know Silvio very well. But I am very grateful to him. He loved you. That would make me [Turn to page 75]



"Maria, tomorrow I start to find your daughter. If it is humanly possible I will bring her to you."

*I Didn't Mind
the Work
So Much
Until It
Came
to the
Point
Where I
Had to
Collect*



*"But isn't there some way
I can—make up?"*

My Overtime Pay

I AM going to tell you as much of the truth as I can. But of course it is not easy for a girl to be altogether frank. The names and places are changed, but the rest is perfectly true.

You can call me Mary. I am twenty-eight years old, and married—thank God!—to a man I love.

But in 19—well, several years ago, I was not married. Moreover, I was without money in a strange city, and had lost my position. Times were very dull, and there were thousands of others in my fix. I had not even a friend, for the girl I had chummed with had gone to Washington to work in one of the Federal Bureaus.

All day I would hunt for work, and then walk home on aching feet to save car-fare. My supper would be a stale bun, and perhaps a cup of coffee at the corner lunch. I think the worst of it was that I didn't dare to have a good cry. It would have made my eyes red, and perhaps have spoiled my chances for a place.

After three weeks of this hopeless seeking, I was ready to give up. There was simply nothing to live for, or that is the way it seemed to me. I was too shy to make friends easily with the other girls, and as for boys—gracious! I hardly dared look at them. Even my

landlady was a terrifying figure in a blue kimono who was always telling me that I must be sure to pay her *in advance*. She was a dreadful woman!

I had decided that if I did not get work on the last day, I would put on my best dress and lie down on the bed with the windows shut and the gas going. I had paid for the room a week ahead, and that would settle for the gas. It made me hysterical to think of the landlady's chagrin.

But I did get work. It wasn't a big place, but just a little suite of cubby-holes set at all angles around a big shabby center room. I'll call my employer "the Boss."

THE Boss was a rather pleasant-looking man of about fifty. He listened carefully to all I had to say, and sat for several minutes looking across the room at the door. Then he turned and looked at me, and suddenly he smiled very charmingly.

"Come tomorrow at eight!" was all he said, but he said it as another man might say, "I am more than honored if you will come!" He would not listen when I tried to thank him. Of course he couldn't have known that he had saved my life, but I knew it.



The thing that made me flush was something else. "The Boss" was standing in the doorway of his office.

When I came the next morning I learned that I had displaced another girl. I was sorry for her, but I thought of my landlady, and I grew hard, and determined not to give up the place. I meant to work very hard to show that I could fill that place.

There was a good deal to the work; at that, it wasn't so difficult after I got used to it. Although the Boss often looked at me with a queer, longing gaze, he was always charmingly polite. I learned from the other girl there—a chatterbox, for I was too shy to ask questions—that the Boss had been a widower for several years.

She also told me that when the business was good, all the little cubby-holes were bustling, and the main office was filled with customers. But things were dull now, and there were only this other girl, the Boss, the bookkeeper, and myself. The bookkeeper was a nice, clean-looking young man; not handsome, but very nice.

I liked the bookkeeper. I suppose it does seem queer, but when he told me his name, all I caught was "Tom—" and he asked me to call him Tom, because he said everyone did, and he'd be embarrassed if I called him anything else. I did not notice him very much, though, for I was working very hard to make good. I did not want to be discharged for incompetence, as the other girl had—the one whose place I had taken.

When I had been working at the place for a week, the

Boss asked me one night if I would work overtime for an hour or so. I agreed willingly, anxious to prove that I could fill the place to perfection.

FIVE o'clock came, and the other girl got up and hurried out. The bookkeeper put his head into the Boss' office and called a good-night, as was his habit, and smiled at me as he left. I smiled back, and then I blushed, because it suddenly occurred to me that he might like me. He looked as if he were going to stop to speak to me, but changed his mind and went out with another pleasant smile.

Then I took the papers into the Boss' office, and waited for him to tell me what to do with them. He told me to put them on his desk and be ready to take dictation. For a moment he sat, frowning, and trying to decide what to say in the letters. I had a chance to study his face, and I rather had to admire him. His face was pleasant, but very serious, with a high, sensitive cast of features. He looked much more like an artist or poet than a business man.

Then he began to dictate, speaking each word in a clear, low, cultured tone. We went through seven letters, all long and important. Sometimes he would stop and sit for a moment, thinking. When he had finished the letters, he got to his feet with a sigh.



"I am tired," he said, "but you must be even more so, my dear! Finish the letters in the morning. You can get them off in time to catch the ten o'clock mail. And now, won't you let me take you to a dinner? Just a quiet restaurant with, perhaps, a little music?"

I did want to go, but I was too shy to say so. I could only sit and look around the room, and try not to look at him.

"But of course you won't!" he said, suddenly bitter. "If I were Tom, now——"

I felt my cheeks getting hot.

"But Tom wouldn't ask me!" I said, and then felt the blush deepening on my cheeks. How silly it must have sounded to him!

"And I did!" But then he laughed, charmingly, and said, "Come, my dear, you really do need a good supper. I am quite a respectable man, and will not carry you off to dishonor, or anything like that, as they do in the moving pictures!" and I had to smile back at him.

So I let him take me to supper. There was some old-fashioned music, too. The kind that is sweet and low and very soothing. He was charming in every sense of the word and made me feel that I was really his equal instead of just his secretary-stenographer. He talked of books and music and pictures in his quiet, deep way.

Business was very poor, competition cutting us terribly; it certainly was not the "life of trade" in our case. So we all had to work hard in spite of the dull

times. I was so busy that sometimes I was not shy. I was glad, for I hated to be that way.

About twice a week I would work overtime with the Boss. Always he would have me to dinner afterwards, until I grew to expect it. But there were times when he would look at me in such a way that it embarrassed me dreadfully, but of course I knew he was a gentleman, and could be trusted.

"You are so shy and quiet, Mary!" he said, once.

"I hate it!" I told him; "I would like—well, to—to—" but I couldn't say that I would like to make men turn to look after me. I hadn't the courage, so I could only flush and turn away from his eyes. But he was wonderfully sympathetic, and understood.

The bookkeeper used to talk to me a great deal, too. It was usually nonsense, but such funny nonsense! He would tease me, or ask ridiculous questions, and I could not help but like him. He would imitate my shy way of looking up under my lashes, and that would make me feel more shy than ever, and yet glad that he had noticed.

SOMETIMES I wondered if he was growing to like me, and speculated as to how I would answer him if he spoke to me about that. I wondered if he could make me love him. He was strong, in a fine American sort of way; the way that is strong but not coarse.

Then, one night, the Boss had me work with him until nearly eight o'clock. He seemed odd, and his mind did not seem on the work. Sometimes he would stare at me, almost rudely, but not quite, for he never was rude. Suddenly he leaned forward and asked me:

"Tell me, are you—er—going with a young man?"

"No!" I said, blushing, and wondering why he should ask. Good heavens! I thought. Was he going to make love to me? I was frightened, but then he smiled at me, and his smile was so charming that I was not afraid any more. He sat then, frowning at his desk. Suddenly he said:

"It is awful to be lonely!"

There was nothing I could say, so I just waited. Then he got up, and laughed:

"Well, no matter! Get your hat, Mary, and we'll eat!"

But he was oddly silent during supper. Several times I caught him gazing at me, and he did not eat very much. My old shyness came over me, for this was not the charming man my Boss usually was.

The next day Tom took me out to lunch. I was glad that he wanted me to go, and I was proud, too. He was the sort of man a girl likes to be seen with, for, as I said, though he was not handsome, he was a likable chap.

He teased me a good deal, but it was a different kind of teasing, and half-serious, so that I was just a little afraid that perhaps I was bold. Then I felt angry with myself. Why, I wanted to be bold!

It was just a crowded "one-arm" [Turn to page 88].

What Would

*There Is an Old Saying That
Justice Should Be Tempered with
Mercy. Is It Not Possible,
Though, That the Offender
Receives Too Much Mercy; That
Justice Appears a Biased Rather
Than a Blind Goddess?*

THE person accused of murder always is certain of a considerable amount of sympathy, because he or she is on the defensive. And I would not deny mercy even to the killer. But, how about the other side of the picture? What of those whom the slayer has deprived of one dearly beloved? What of the family of the person whom death by homicide has robbed of its natural protector and bread winner?

Why is there so little sympathy for them? Are they not also entitled to consideration—and justice?

I ask these questions because I was one of the innocent victims of a killer—a slayer to whom sympathy brought liberty in the guise of merciful justice. Was it fair that I should have been deprived of almost everything which made life worth living, while the maker of my misery was permitted to go free?

However, before you pass judgment, let me tell my story. And determine also if I did the right thing when time brought me the opportunity to strike back for what I consider a miscarriage of justice.

Jeanne Dale is my name. I passed my early years in a prosperous, bustling little Ohio city, the residents of which took their greatest pride in the number of factory chimneys which beclouded the sky with the smoke of industry. I had neither sister nor brother.

My father, John Dale, was owner of a modest steel mill. He was a man of education, industrious and methodical in his habits, who believed he was doing his full duty to the family he loved by supplying them with every needed comfort and striving to put aside sufficient for their maintenance in the event of an untoward happening to him.

My beautiful, pleasure-loving and imaginative mother was his direct opposite. There was no doubt of her affection for him. But, until her marriage, she had taught school, and the ensuing years of housework irked her. She missed the freedom she had known, and never



You Have Done?

"No," I replied. "You won't ring to have me removed — Frederick Holden."

"What—what name was that you called me?"



ceased striving to persuade my father to play more and work less—to go to parties, picnics, the theatre and the like, occasionally. But he put her off, insisting that his work required his time; though he urged her to enjoy herself as she desired.

"Some day," he would say, "when the business can take care of itself and we are independent, we will make up for lost time."

But the period to which my mother looked forward never came.

I experienced none of the monotony which marked Mother's life. Both parents and my old nurse, Nancy,—who also had watched over my mother's childhood—saw to it that I was denied few things I desired and had just as many good times as my playmates. However, my studies were not neglected, for I hoped to equip myself for a promised college course.

NO IMPORTANT change took place in our mode of living until I had entered my teens. Then Frederick Holden came to our city. I was too young then to comprehend all that took place, but I learned that he and Father were chums and roommates at college and, following their graduation, had kept in touch with each other through infrequent correspondence.

But, from knowledge which I obtained later, I can give more details concerning him. Always of an inventive frame of mind, he had perfected and patented many contrivances, but always had sold them outright, squandering the money in seeking excitement and new sensations in various places beyond the seas.

Returning from Europe without funds, but with an idea for a new type of motor, he had searched out my father to advance necessary money and help him with the invention. Both were to share equally in whatever rewards might come. They reached an agreement and, at Father's suggestion, Frederick Holden came to live with us.

He was good-looking, a fluent talker, loved gaiety, and was the very opposite of my father in temperament and habits. He immediately made himself one of the family. To him Mother was just Marilyn and Father was Jack. Having no near relatives, I called him Uncle Fred.

There is no doubt that from the first he was attracted by my mother's beauty, and she, in turn, welcomed his lively companionship—the kind she had failed to find in my father. Each day the two men spent hours at the mill working upon the new motor, but at most other times Uncle Fred—with Father's consent—was Mother's escort to places of amusement. Had I been older and had Father been less occupied with his seemingly endless tasks, we would have realized that the intimacy between Mother and our visitor progressed rapidly toward a dangerous point. More than once I noted Mother and Nancy in earnest, whispered conference, but did not guess its significance.

Then the motor was perfected and patented, and soon afterward a Chicago firm offered many thousands for its purchase. Of all of us, Father appeared to be the most delighted, for it meant the fulfillment of his dream to place his family definitely beyond possibility of want and an opportunity to return with them to his native

state, California. As it was necessary to dispose of the mill before taking the step, however, he left for Cincinnati to consult a possible purchaser at the same time Uncle Fred headed for Chicago to dispose of the motor.

It was the second night following, after Nancy and I had retired to our room, and Mother was alone in the library below, that there came a ring at the bell. Mother answered, and listening at my door I heard the voice of Uncle Fred, who had returned before we expected him, and her cry of surprised welcome. Informing my companion who the late comer was, I continued undressing. But, before I was in bed, the sound of Uncle Fred's voice raised to an excited pitch drew Nancy and me into the hallway. For a moment I could not catch what was being said, though both were directly below me. Then I heard Mother cry, "No, no, I couldn't! You're mad! I love John and Jeanne. I'll never leave them."

"I won't let you play with me, Merilyn." It was his voice. "You made me love you. You must go with—"

NEXT came the sound of a scuffle. Mother shrieked. There was a crash as the front door was opened. I heard Father shouting angry words. Then a shot—an agonizing cry—and deadly stillness.

Realizing that something fearful had occurred, I clung to the banister, stunned and numb. But, when Nancy brushed me and started below, I followed, peering over



What I saw when I reached the foot of the steps will remain etched upon my memory for all time.

her shoulder. The silence after the shot was unbearable.

What I saw when I reached the foot of the steps will remain etched upon my memory for all time. Frederick Holden, ghastly pale beneath the lights, a revolver in his hand, stood backed against the wall. In the doorway lay the body of my father, shot through the breast, and my mother, mercifully insensible, stretched across him.

Holden was soon arrested and charged with murder. But Fate played in his favor, for my mother, the only witness to the shooting, never was able to tell her story. The shock of the killing not only made her a hopeless paralytic, but so unsettled her reason that never again was she able to talk coherently. Some of you will remember the case, and how carefully it was guarded from the press. The intimate details were never published.

At the trial the prisoner pleaded self-defense, insisting that he had fired only to save his own life when attacked. His explanation was that he had paid my father for his assistance and had returned the money advanced, but that a quarrel had arisen when a demand for a full half share of the sum derived from the sale of the patent was refused. As the agreement with Father had not been made in writing and there was no record of the loans, there was nothing to disprove his assertions.

Nancy gave no testimony of moment, and when I repeated the scraps of conversation I had heard, my evidence was so twisted by Holden's attorney that they were made to support his statement there had been a quarrel. The fact that he carried a revolver without a permit was the only thing which told against him, and he escaped with a three-year prison sentence.

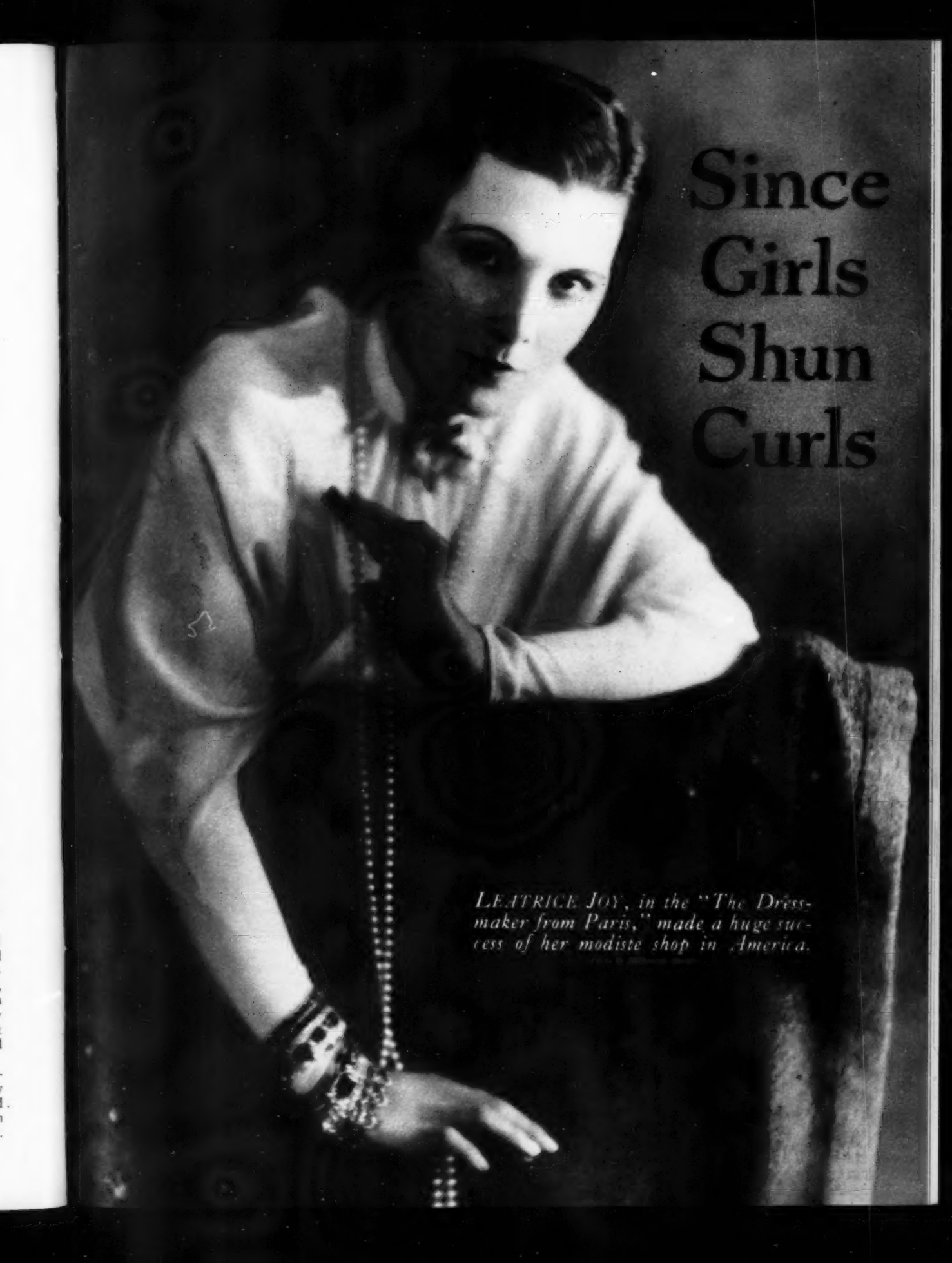
But even that meagre punishment never was exacted in full. Holden's attorney aroused sympathy in his behalf on the ground that a man should not be sent to prison for defending his life, and in answer to the petitions asking for clemency, to which he obtained many signatures, the prisoner was granted a full pardon within six months after sentence had been imposed. He never even came to inquire concerning Mother, before leaving for a destination I did not learn.

During the period he was behind bars and afterward, Nancy and I cared for my poor mother, and did everything within our power to have her restored to health. But we accomplished nothing. She never recovered her reason, and after being bed-ridden for two years, she died. In the meantime, everything realized from the sale of our home and the mill had been spent for our maintenance and for specialists whom we had summoned from the big cities in an effort to help her. After paying the expenses of the funeral, Nancy and I were beggared.

AS THERE were no relatives to whom I could be sent, and I was legally not of age to go to work, and Nancy was too old to earn a living, the authorities determined we must be separated. I was to be sent to an orphan asylum in an outlying district, and my elderly nurse to a "home."


Taking from me the only person on earth who loved me seemed an unnecessary blow. But, though we both cried and pleaded to be kept together, our prayers went unheeded. It was the night before our final leave-taking, when Nancy and I were alone in the few rooms in which we had lived with Mother, that she told me what actually lay behind the killing of my father. Though I was but sixteen then, I understood; the revelation hurt and shamed me.

From things overheard through deliberate eavesdropping, Nancy had learned that Holden had become deeply infatuated with Mother. And, though she probably did not entertain a like feeling, she was very fond of him and welcomed the change he had brought into her life. And she did not send him away [Turn to page 95]



Since Girls Shun Curls

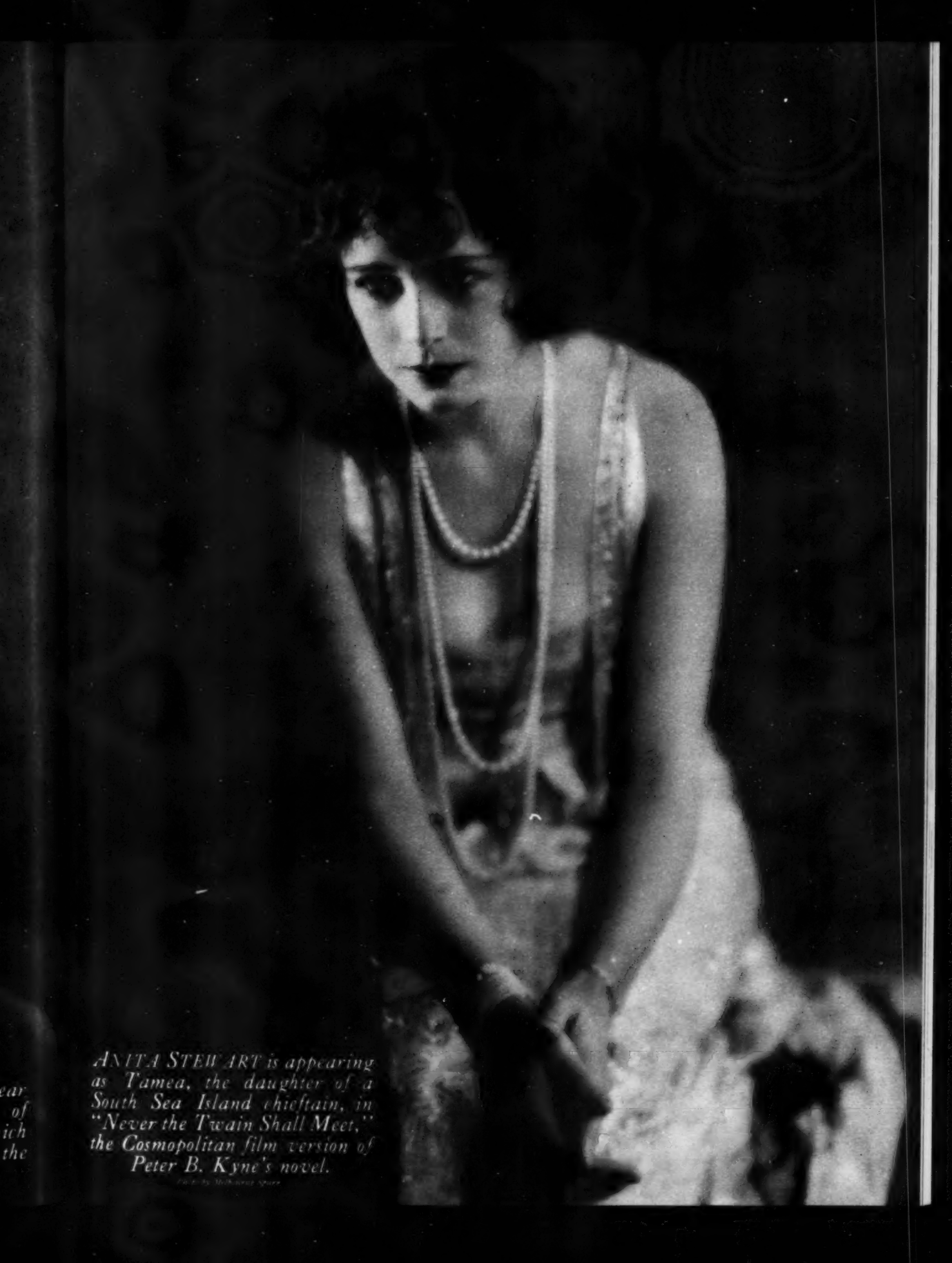
*LEATRICE JOY, in the "The Dress-
maker from Paris," made a huge suc-
cess of her modiste shop in America.*



VILMA BANKY will appear soon in the screen version of "The Dark Angel," which made a great appeal on the legitimate stage.


Photo by Allen

ear
of
ich
the



ANITA STEWART is appearing
as Tamea, the daughter of a
South Sea Island chieftain, in
"Never the Twain Shall Meet,"
the Cosmopolitan film version of
Peter B. Kyne's novel.

Photo by Melvin Frank



*NORMA SHEARER is
starring in "Slaves of
Fashion" as a poor girl
who has some amazing
things happen in the
course of a trip East.*

Photo by George N. Stone

... that there was
more to life than
parties and cocktails



My Mountain Violin

*I Think a Woman Always Wants to Hate the Man
Whose Love Has Cooled—but Somehow—*

I CAN'T hate Frank Forrest.
Possibly this is because he wasn't the cause of it
all—not nearly so much as circumstance.

Maybe, if Frank ever reads this, he will understand,
and know why I made the choice I did. The thought that
it may help him to know is the thing that impels me most
to write. I was almost harsh; I never explained, and I
do not want him to think that I hate him. I cannot.

In spite of everything that was between us, every-
thing that happened, Frank was too fair and decent for
that.

To many, part of my story is like thousands of others;
to me, it is only mine. No one code can cover every
individual case. It is because I believe this in my heart
that I am not afraid to speak.

I had come to New York from a small Canadian town,
just across from the New York state boundary, deter-
mined to be an actress. That part of the story isn't a
bit new; perhaps the rest isn't, either.

I met with failure.

I know now that I had neither the genius nor the
ordinary ability to be a good actress; however, I expected
to get anywhere I wanted, simply by virtue of a beauty
that I deserved no credit for, but which I knew I had.

There came a time when I cursed that beauty. With-
out it, I might have realized my incompetence and come
to an understanding of the fact that there were other
things in life besides a career and the praise of those
"out front."

Things that I know now—like motherhood and home

—mean so much more in the end. They are their own reward.

But at nineteen I didn't know those things. I only knew that every job I got on the stage was got because of my looks; I sensed that I'd never get beyond the chorus, or maybe a three-or-four-line part in some musical comedy where I'd enter as the maid and perhaps "feed" the juvenile enough to let him make a few Broadway "wise cracks."

And there I was when I met Frank Forrest and made my choice.

IT WAS at a party to which all of the girls in the show had been invited, on one of the big hotel roofs. Frank was the circulation manager of a big magazine, with an interest in the corporation; a big man, but he didn't try to impress anyone with the fact.

He was married and his wife wouldn't give him a divorce, although they had not lived together for two years.

I didn't have the things I wanted, and he was able to offer them to me. He was quite fair, from the very beginning.

"I'll wait for love," he said, "if it's ever to come. Meanwhile, we're both a bit lonesome and need the companionship."

I moved a week after from my cheerless, furnished room in the "Roaring Forties," into a five-room apartment, with a maid, on the Drive.

That was all very well for a while. Frank never asked for my love, nor did I want his. We were pals.

Years slipped by, years of ease and comfort and even luxury—six of them, until something began to tell me that a change was necessary. I didn't know what it was, except that its expression was a vague dissatisfaction with things as they were.

Perhaps it was the dawning of realization that there was more to life than parties and cocktails and ease and a mockery of love; something more than elegance and luxury and a mind free from care.

I had given up my theatrical ambitions by then; I had convinced myself that they were unfounded. One day I told myself that I had beauty and beauty only to offer—and that I was getting the highest price for that.

It was harsh and I quivered as I told it to my reflection in the mirror; but it was true.

"I'm going away, Frank," I announced that night.

"Where?" he demanded, quite composed, as always.

"I don't know," I hesitated; "into the woods, or the mountains, somewhere."

He got up quietly and held me for a moment in his arms, lifting up my chin until I was looking into his eyes.

"I've felt something coming on for a long time," he said gravely. "Perhaps you need a change. Perhaps you're dissatisfied with—things. But whatever it is, you'll have to fight it out for yourself. I think you know that."

"I believe—that's it, Frank," I faltered.

He nodded. "Only, I wish you'd remember that I've grown to love you, dear," he said, more tenderly than he'd ever spoken before. "If I could, I'd show the whole

world my love and be proud of it. But—" he shrugged—"I can't. I'm bound. Will you try to remember?"

I moved away from him. "I'll remember—everything," I told him.

The very next day I had discharged my maid, packed my belongings, and shut up the apartment. I didn't know where I was going, but I knew it was summer and I was going to get as near to my old home as possible. There I could rest.

I found myself eventually in a little cabin up in the Adirondacks, not far from the Canadian line, living with an old woman whose husband had died three years before and who had lived alone since then. She was away from the tourist traffic on the State Road a mile below us, and it was seldom that any stray trampers came near the place.

The woods were clean and refreshing. But inside, I was not happy.

I sent Frank my address. When I did it I realized that there was no other future for me but the one he offered back in New York.

I was tied to a man whom I respected and liked, but could never love. I knew that. There was simply not the spark there.

One night, when I had gone to bed early, the wind came, tearing and lashing among the thick trees and the underbrush like a wild beast, bringing in its wake a deluge of rain that the inhabitants of the Mohawk Valley had been wanting for weeks.

But to me it was like the turmoil in my soul. At the end of the week I was supposed to leave for New York to rejoin Frank and a party that was starting on a motor trip through Canada.

I didn't want to go back.

There was anguish, fierce anguish, in my heart, and the bitter, certain knowledge that my white hands, kissed in adoration by so many men, were yet not strong enough to battle against the fate that was

holding me pinned to my course, helpless as the frailest butterfly.

Then suddenly, an undercurrent to the chaos of nature and yet soothing in its sobbing sadness, there came a new sound out of the night—the plaintive, sweet notes of a violin!

I listened; I seemed to feel my very soul leap from its tortured fastenings to meet the sound; I sensed the turbulence of my emotions suddenly eased and mysteriously calmed; I was strangely at peace.

I SHALL never know what the melody was, if there was any, nor did I wonder at that time who the player was. I just accepted it, gratefully, as a tortured man accepts a drug.

I went to sleep.

The next morning the storm had subsided and I asked Mrs. Bream who could have been playing. She replied that it must have been her nearest neighbor, the boy who tended the hunting lodge a mile away.

The lodge was owned by an Englishman, she said, who paid rare visits to America. The violinist lived most of the year in the little cottage far away from the main house, which was near the spring where I went sometimes to sit and dream, in my rambles up and down

From somewhere in the deep woods, hushed now with night, the violin was still playing. An owl hooted through the trees.

I wanted to find Mervin and tell him everything: tell him, too, how his message had sustained me when I needed it most; tell that I had made my great resolve and that, for better or for worse, I was going out to make my own fight against the world that had condemned me.



"You heard?" he asked simply.
"I heard," I said. "It was what I
needed." And then I poured out in
halting, yet rapid phrases, the whole
wretched story.

the mountainside. His name was Mervin Craigh.

Mrs. Bream had not heard the playing; she was almost deaf.

I said no more, but left the house. Impelled by some instinct which I could not account for, but which was more powerful than my own will, I sought the spring. I think there was a faint curiosity to see the mysterious player of the previous night.

As though it had really been fate which directed my footsteps that morning, there he was when I reached the spring, just arising from a long drink.

He looked up at me coolly and speculatively, as though he might have been the lord of a manor and I the trespasser.

Mrs. Bream had called him a boy. He was more than that, though I could see that he was a year or so younger than I.

But strangely, with all my sophistication and experience, I had the feeling that he was immensely older and wiser than I; that I was a little girl who had not always

lay on the grass behind him. But why didn't he speak?

"I heard your playing last night during the storm," I told him. "It was very beautiful."

"Thank you," he said simply. "I always play during a storm. Perhaps it's a primeval throwback—the desire to see if soothing sound cannot overcome chaotic sound." He shrugged whimsically. "Maybe it's really because I know the storm will help to drown out my music. Are you the lady from New York who is staying at Mrs. Bream's house?"

I REPLIED that I was. His whimsical air vanished; he looked at me searchingly. That fearless, confident glance of his impelling eyes!

"You are tired," he said at last. "That is why you liked my playing."

"Tired?" I repeated and then laughed, a trifle bitterly. "How did you know? I am more than—just tired. For that, would you play for me again?"

"I've wanted to," he said gravely, "ever since I set eyes upon you." His tone was a graceful compliment, but a compliment that implied worlds of understanding.

Somehow, I felt that he *knew*, and wanted to help.

He played, leaning back with an easy, natural grace against the sleek trunk of a big poplar, while I sat at his feet and drank in every note of the sweetest melody I have ever heard.

"Have you ever thought of the concert stage?" I asked him, when he had finished and we had both sat in silence for some little while.

His eyes smouldered with a kind of scorn. "I have tried the stage," he said bitterly. There was a moment of silence. Then, "I came back here," he

finished, with a simple gesture that spoke volumes.

I nodded understanding. The outside world had throttled and bruised him and he had had the strength and the courage to come back here to find peace. I envied him.

Yet there was more than that. I knew it when I had met him for three days in succession, as if by design, at the spring, and after he had played to me each day. With the touch of his bow across the strings, as if by magic, all my troubles and sorrows would vanish.

I came to confuse the player with the playing; I thought of them together, until I realized that they *were* one.

Then I knew, when I surprised his eyes upon me, that he had been playing to me of himself; that he was expressing the things he thought and did not speak; that Mervin Craigh was coming to love me and that I—I loved him.

There was at first a panic at the thought. It must not be—it could not be!

That I, one of the roses of Broadway, should inspire love in this boy who was as clean and fine as his own woods, was inconceivable. But it was true. That it should go farther than that; that I should love him, perhaps even—

[Turn to page 100]



Coming through the window was the voice of someone who loved me.

been good, and he a man who had seen much of life.

His eyes were deep and dark, lit by a straight, direct gleam of swift intelligence. His hands were the hands of an artist, and his lithe, slim form was that of the outdoorsman. There was nothing out of the ordinary about him—nothing morbid or strange—except that he was very handsome, with his dark, straight hair and whimsical, mobile mouth.

AS HE stood looking at me, I felt a strange peace flood through my body, almost exactly the feeling I had experienced the night before at the sound of his playing. But he was so cool and calm, so perfectly self-possessed, that even with all my training, I felt that I had either to speak or be the first to become embarrassed.

"You are Mervin Craigh," I said, more as a statement than a question.

He nodded. I noticed then that an old violin and bow

*I Was a
Simp Moll
All Right
—But
Jimmie
Didn't
Get Me
in a
Dance
Hall!*



We had rehearsed our act until we had it down pat

Just Running Chinks

WHEN I write this I have just one hope, one prayer: that it may in some way come to the eyes of Jimmie Doll—"Baby Doll," his molls always called him—so that he will know that I am living just to find him.

I was one of his molls, the easiest one of the lot. What chance did I have—a kid? The idea that I could beat a game that can't be beaten! Jimmie taught me that you have to pay for what you get in this world, and you have to keep your eyes open every minute or get short changed.

Most of the "grifters," a name that is applied to con men, burglars, stickup men, sneaks, store thieves, and pickpockets, get their molls from the dance halls. When they first pick them up and begin to teach them the ropes, they are known as "simp" molls; when they can work alone, they are called "wise" molls.

I was a simp moll all right, but Jimmie didn't get me in a dance hall. Fate and my own weakness picked me

up and set me down right in the palm of his hand, and from then on he played me for all he was worth.

I was born and raised in a cold, foreboding house in a small city across the Hudson from New York. When I was thirteen my father died from the various things that bring death to a man who spends most of his life trying to drink all the rum in the world. When he died, what little warmth and color there seemed to be in our house faded away.

MY MOTHER and only sister were the stern, rigid, unbending sort with a family tradition to uphold. All that remained of the tradition really, was a life-sized portrait of Mother's grandfather that hung in the dark, dismal hallway. The wallpaper fell away from the plaster in spots, and the carpet was ragged and worn under the dim light of the one gas-burner, but Grandfather's picture always remained the same.

When I was a little girl and had been punished for

some trivial thing, I used to go out into the hallway and stand gazing up into Grandfather Loring's eyes; they would twinkle down into mine as though he understood.

Whenever Mother began scolding at Father for his incessant drinking—I don't blame him much now, when I look back at it—and say that she, a Loring, must have been insane to have married him, he would just laugh and say, "Your Grandfather Loring was a slick horse-trader, if that's what you mean!"

Mother would go into a rage and words would fly thick and fast, sneering words that cut through to my heart.

ONE time when Father came home and the usual argument began, Mother ordered him out of the house. But, as usual, he just laughed and went up the rickety old stairs to the room he occupied in the back of the house. A few minutes later I stole up after him and knocked on his door.

"Go 'way, dammit!" he called.

"It's Eleanor," I whispered.

I heard the bed creak and he threw open the door and pulled me in and took me on his knee. After we had talked for a few minutes I asked, "Daddy, was Grandfather Loring really a horse-trader?" I didn't know what a horse-trader was, but I gathered that it was something below what Mother thought was right, from the way Daddy spoke.

Father looked startled for a moment and then he said, "You bet he was, Eleanor, and a darn good one, too. Your mother's grand-daddy used to bring in carloads of horses from the West and sell them to the farmers." Daddy threw back his head and chuckled. "Of course sometimes the farmer had to load the horse on a wagon to get him out of your grand-daddy's barn, but that was part of the game. He could swap horses with a pawn-broker and beat him!"

From what Father conveyed to me that day I got the idea that Grandfather Loring was a pretty slick man, and I began to understand why his eyes twinkled so. Then, after Daddy died, I used to stand before Grandfather Loring's picture and wonder if I couldn't be as smart as he was. I wanted to do something to get enough money to put shingles on the house, so the water didn't leak down through the ceiling of my room; to put panes in the broken windows in the attic; to buy enough food so that Mother didn't seem to begrudge me every piece of bread I ate.

It wouldn't have been so bad if Mother hadn't kept saying to me that I was just like my father. One time I answered, "I think I'm like Grandfather Loring, too," and she nearly had apoplexy.

TIME and again I tried to tell Mother that we ought to give up our gloomy old house and go to New York so that I could work and buy some of the things that make people happy. But all my suggestions were received with little sniffs of contempt.

"The Lorings were the first people to settle in this town and they settled right on this spot," Mother would say, "and if it was good enough for them it's good enough for me!"

Finally, I decided that if they wanted to live and die

in the thought of what had been years before, that was all right for them but there was no reason why I should be forced to take the same dose if I could find another way out for myself.

So one afternoon I packed a battered old bag with what few clothes I possessed and hid it under my bed. During the rest of the afternoon and evening I tried to be kind and nice to my mother and sister. I was hoping for some show of kindness in return as an excuse to change my mind and not run away. But none came, so after they had gone to bed I wrote a little note and left it on the bureau in my room telling Mother not to worry about me. Then I pulled out my bag and stole down the hallway as silently as the stairs would allow. I stood for a moment before Grandfather Loring's portrait. His keen old eyes peered down into mine in the flickering gas light, and in their depths I seemed to see approval and applause for what I was doing.

A little later Jimmie told me they were hijackers; that if they had got aboard, they would have captured or killed us.



My eyes were wet as I slipped noiselessly out of the front door and hurried around the corner to get the ten o'clock trolley to the ferry. What I was leaving wasn't much to my way of thinking, but the environment of nineteen years isn't thrown over one's shoulder without a backward glance.

I will never forget my emotions as I stood on the forward deck of the ferry-boat. The white caps in the harbor seemed to snap angrily at the prow of the boat

as we ploughed through them. Two Italians played mournfully upon a squeaky violin and a protesting music box for the few coins they could gather, their efforts sounding to my ears like the wail of a funeral hymn. Behind me loomed the black cold outline of the Palisades that was home. And ahead were the bright, twinkling lights of New York—romance, mystery, the wonders of all the world!

When I arrived on the New York side I did as I had planned and took the elevated to 104th Street. Then I scooted down the elevated steps and around the corner to the apartment of Mrs. Carson, Mother's oldest friend.



I knew she would understand and would help me, for I had heard her try any number of times to get Mother to give up her house, forget her traditions, and take a cheap little apartment in New York.

It was nearly eleven-thirty when I rang her bell. In a moment the lock on the downstairs door clicked. I ran up the steps and found her standing in her apartment door in her nightgown, a frilly nightcap pulled down over her hair. When she saw who it was her sleepy eyes

opened with astonishment. But she didn't let me stand out in the hallway to explain, like a lot of people would have done. She took me in her arms and kissed me and then, putting an arm about my shoulders, led me into her apartment and fussed over me and made me some dainty little sandwiches before she even hinted that she was interested in *why* I had come.

When I finally got my story out she shook her head, rather sadly I thought, and said, "I'll do the best I know, dear."

AFTER she took me to my bedroom and kissed me good-night, I noticed that her cheeks were wet with tears. Then, when I was ready for bed, I heard her talking softly over the telephone. At first the rumble of the elevated drowned out her words. But when it had passed I heard her tell someone, probably her brother, that he must go and get my mother the first thing in the morning and bring her over.

At first I was angry; she had betrayed my confidence. Then I realized that she was doing what she thought best, and was really the only thing she could do. But I knew what Mother would say *and do*, so I waited until everything was quiet. Then I quickly put on my clothes again, and when the next elevated train went rumbling by I went silently out her door and down the street.

I didn't have very much money, but I knew that unless I found some place to sleep before long I would collapse from the nervous strain of the past twelve hours. So I took the elevated train down to Times Square and asked a policeman where I could find a cheap hotel. He looked at me suspiciously for a moment and then directed me to a place. The clerk and the one or two loungers in the smelly lobby looked me over from my head to my toes; I could feel the color mounting to my face in anger. Finally he gave me a room, and when I was safely in it, with the door locked and bolted, I breathed the first easy breath in hours, throwing myself on the bed exhausted.

The sun was streaming in my window when I awoke and looked about me. My first dazed feeling of not recognizing my surroundings was followed by one of happy anticipation of what lay ahead of me—happy, until I counted my money and realized that I must get some kind of work and begin immediately.

I bought a morning paper and scanned the Help Wanted columns while I ate a hard, shiny coffee roll, washing it down with a cup of bitter coffee. The only things I could find that seemed likely for me were ads for waitresses and salesgirls. So I checked off the latter and went down Sixth Avenue toward the first on my list, a department store at Herald Square.

In the store I asked a salesgirl where the employment office was located. She looked me over with a sneering grin and directed me to the seventh floor, adding, "You're about two hours late, dearie!"

When I arrived at the seventh floor and found the employment room filled to overflowing with girls of all sorts, sizes, and shapes, I knew she was right. So I decided not to wait, and started toward the next place on my list. It was the same there, and at the next, and the next. My head ached; my feet felt like lead; my eyes burned as though they were filled with cinders.

At a place on Fifth Avenue I found a sign saying that all the positions had been filled. I wanted to sit down on the hard wooden bench and cry. Instead, I knocked on the little glass window that opened into the inner office. After a moment a [Turn to page 85]

*I Became
an Incident
in Helen's Life;
Her Baby Became
Life Itself—
Until the Night
That I Think Of
as*

*Then I began to see
Viola other places,
hoping Helen would
hear of it.*

The Last Mile-Stone



I AM only a man; and if what I have done in my blind, blundering masculine way offends the sensibilities of my feminine readers I hope they will not condemn me until they have finished my story.

I loved my wife. The first year of our married life opened up to me a new heaven and a new earth. And when our first baby was born it seemed as if the very particles of the air I breathed were composed of sheer, crystal happiness. The love I felt for my child was so much a part of what I felt for Helen that I was conscious of no division of this love. I think this is true of most men: the more they care for their wives, the dearer their children are to them. But I learned that this was not the case with women—or, at least, it was not the case with Helen. I became an incident in her life. Her baby became life itself.

One night particularly stands out in my memory as a sort of matrimonial mile-stone.

We had a standing, weekly engagement to play bridge with Ted Birdsall and his wife, and for over a year every Wednesday night we four had got together for this purpose. The first interruption came when our baby was born; but when he was six weeks old I asked Helen if she did not feel like taking it up again. The Birdsalls had asked us there. She was rather half-hearted in her compliance with the idea, but I did not realize that until much, much later.

"All right, Billy," she sighed; "if I can tear myself

away from Baby when the time comes. You must re——"

"Oh, he'll be asleep. And Ina"—Ina was our Swedish maid of all work—"can stay in the room with him until we get home."

I remember laughing at her for her reluctance, thinking how much I loved her for her newly acquired maternal manner. "I'm almost jealous of the boy," I joked, putting my arm around her.

The Birdsalls were delighted at the idea of our coming. I met Ted on the subway going downtown to business that morning. "See you tonight, old Pater Familias," he shouted over the roar of the train; "it's going to be a regular celebration. The fatted calf won't be a patch on what we're getting ready for you two."

GOOD old Ted, I thought to myself. The realization of his friendship stayed with me all day. I looked forward to the evening with a genuine warmth of feeling.

On my arrival home I found Helen in the little room we called the nursery. The baby, pink and chubby, was sleeping in his old-fashioned cradle, the picture of everything a healthy baby should be.

"The funny little beggar," I whispered, taking Helen into my arms.

She did not respond to my kiss, but kept her eyes fastened on the child. "He cried a long time this afternoon," she murmured; "it—it worried me, Billy."

"Nonsense—the doctors would worry if he didn't.

Babies have to cry to make their lungs grow, or something like that." I laughed at her. "If you can worry over a healthy specimen like that boy of ours, you're a genius."

"It's not a laughing matter," Helen cried; "if anything should happen to Baby, I don't know what I'd do. You don't understand, Billy. Men don't. I—"

"Why, you silly little—idiot!" I interrupted her, holding her close. I knew that the boy was right as rain. No one but a super-sensitive and overwrought mother could have looked down on his chubby little person and thought otherwise. And I was on fire with my love for Helen. "I'm crazy about you," I murmured, tingling with the consciousness of her in my arms.

To my amazement she wrenched herself free. "I hardly think it's the time for love-making, Billy, when I'm worried about Baby. If you can't be sympathetic, you, at least, might be considerate."

I have the average man's temper. And I felt thwarted,

by the baby's crib. She did not look up as I entered.

I controlled my voice with an effort. "If you don't hurry and dress we'll be late," I said. "The Birdsalls have killed the fatted calf for us tonight, you know. I met Ted going down in the subway this morning. I'll telephone for a taxi while you—"

She interrupted me. "I'm not going. I'm going to stay—here."

NONSENSE. Of course you're going." Her attitude struck me as utterly childish, and I was tactless where I should have been tactful. "If the boy were sick I'd be the first one to want to stay home. But he's not; he's the healthiest specimen of humanity I've seen in many a long day. We just have time to make it. Don't sit there like a beautiful statue. A little action, my dear."

"You can go without me if you want to," she replied; "I'm not going. Bridge—what on earth do I care about bridge!"

"It's not bridge—it's the Birdsalls I care about!" I was exasperated. "Can't you see—"

"Hush!" She raised a dainty, pink-tipped finger to her lips. "You'll wake him if you shout like that. For goodness sake, go on to your old bridge-Birdsall party and leave me in peace."

And that was the last word I could get out of her. To her I was a barbarian, threatening the quiet of her maternity by my demands on her time. So far as she was concerned, I was out of the picture entirely.

The evening at the Birdsalls was flat. I think all three of us felt like a boy who has been holding a pretty, bright-colored balloon in his hands which somebody has suddenly and unexpectedly pricked. Their invitation for the following week was tentative.

"If Helen doesn't feel she can come, you come along anyway," they said; "we'll get another girl for the fourth."

And that's the way it worked out. Helen was tired and, although she tried to be nice about it, I could see she didn't want to go. So I went

alone, knowing that not to turn up would be to hurt my friends' feelings.

Viola Trotman made up the table.

HOW nice people like Ted and Betty Birdsall knew Viola is something I cannot understand as I look back upon it. She was a dashing, dark haired divorcee. She was restless for excitement. She was beautiful enough and fascinating enough always to draw excitement to her. And she was the predatory type that sees lawful prey in another woman's husband.

I was too much in love with Helen and too hurt at her new neglect of me to analyze Viola. All I saw in her that first evening and the days that followed was that her dark eyes rested on me softly, soothing my wounded



*The minute she spoke I knew she was real—real and beautiful and human.
"Billy, can you forgive me? I—I've been such a fool."*

unsatisfied. I smothered an oath and left the room. When, half an hour later, Ina announced dinner in her queer, broken English I was still upset. The bloom was off the evening. I went into the dining-room without waiting for Helen.

"Mrs. Jordan—she no come to dinner," Ina announced when I was seated at the table.

Ina, for a Swede, was a good cook; but I hardly tasted the things she placed before me that night. After a hastily swallowed demi-tasse, I could stand it no longer, and went back to the nursery, hurt and mystified. It was as if an evil fairy had waved her wand over our lives, sowing discord where there had been happiness and understanding.

Helen, a tray of untasted food beside her, was seated



"I hardly think it's time for love-making, Billy, when I'm worried about Baby," she said.

vanity, reassuring my manhood. She played a strong game—one in which hearts were always trumps.

In saying this I do not want to imply that all blame rested on Viola's beautiful shoulders. I was to blame, too—horribly to blame.

For six weeks the Birdsalls, Viola, and I played together every Wednesday night. Then I began to see Viola other places. At first I hoped Helen would hear of it, would perhaps see me out with another woman, and be jealous. But Baby then was beginning to notice when someone wiggled a finger before his eyes, and crow with delight at the phenomenon, and all Helen could think of was this sign of his marvelous intelligence.

I remember after my first dinner with Viola I returned home about ten o'clock with a guilty conscience. I was even determined to confess to Helen the fact that I had not remained late at the office as I had telephoned, but had enjoyed champagne and lobster with another woman.

"Helen," I stammered, after a preliminary and apologetic cough, "I have something I feel I must tell you." I acted like a naughty schoolboy who has played hooky.

"I have something to tell you, too," she smiled. She put her arm through mine and looked up at me with the clear, honest eyes that I loved. "Baby laughed today—laughed, like a real grown-up person. It was like this—"

She was making it hard for me, but I persisted, interrupting her. "Let me say my little speech first. If you don't, my courage may give out entirely."

OH, IF it takes courage, don't bother," she returned, giving my arm a little squeeze. "Save your courage for something important and listen to me. You know the book on 'How To Bring Up Your Baby' says particularly that the average child doesn't laugh out loud—"

And so on. I did not confess that night. And I cannot remember allowing my conscience to trouble me again. All Helen seemed to care about was Baby. Well, then, I told myself, I must seek my pleasures someplace else.

Viola flattered me. She made me feel myself abused—a thing that is dangerous for any man. She would lay her long slender hand on mine and [Turn to page 79]

It's Good *to be* Alone

*I Simply Took
It for Granted
That Love
Would Find Me
Some Time, and
Wasn't So
Concerned About
a Prince Charming
Who Would Come
and Carry Me
Away.*



"Haven't pumped water for sometime," he was saying.

*"Two t'ms two's four,
"Two t'ms three's six,
"Two t'ms four's eight."*

THIS was the fourth time I had taught the same things, over and over. The teacher in a tiny, all-grades' school in the farm lands of Indiana cannot be said to have a very exciting life, but I was never discontent. As the daughter of a well-to-do farmer, I claimed, as a background, a Normal School education, a good home, a lovely family, and a few of the boys with whom I had grown up, as callers. If I had ever dreamed of a Prince Charming who would come and carry me away, it was not seriously. I simply took it for granted that Love would find me somehow, some where, some time.

And it did.

"March out quietly and go straight home," I was saying on the afternoon of a wonderful day in early spring. It was earlier than my usual dismissing time, but the kiddies had been very restless.

My little schoolhouse, a neat frame building, sitting

some twenty yards from the main road, was then silent. I was marking papers at the little oak desk when a step sounded in the doorway, followed by a loud knock. Never easily excited, I went to the door.

"Awfully sorry to interrupt you," he was saying as I opened the door, "but I just wanted to beg some water. Been driving pretty hard, and the motor's boiling." He waved to the road, where a long, low machine stood panting.

NO TROUBLE at all! I'll show you where the pump is." I led him to the other side of the schoolhouse. He was a perfectly attired man of perhaps forty-two, with a kind, strong face and greying hair. He laughed as he took the pump-handle.

"Haven't pumped water for some time. I was raised—yes, raised, not reared—on a farm about thirty miles below here. That's where I'm going now, just for a little spring visit. Always get out into the country on the first spring day.

I told him why I had let the children out early—how I had felt ashamed to keep them in on such a glorious day.

"But how about you?" he asked. "Aren't you tired?" "Oh, I'll soon finish marking papers; then I can go home."

He filled the radiator, then replaced the bucket.

"Let's be adventurous! I feel like a child who wants to play, myself!" he said. "If I introduced myself very thoroughly, would you dare to play hooky, and take a ride into Bloomington for a bite to eat. I'll rush you right back."

I hesitated . . . the motor in the big car purred . . . the low seats looked very inviting. I liked this man's looks; he seemed honest, sincere, and undeniably well-bred. He was already presenting me with personal and business cards, lodge and club membership cards, and auto licenses, and we laughed over his identifications, they were so numerous. That the president of a world famous chemical company, with offices in Chicago and a great home in Evanston, a man financially and socially known all over the world, should require such identifying for a country school-teacher!

INDEED, Mr. Gregory, after all this, I will play hooky. My introduction is only Lucy Adams, school-teacher."

Graciously he helped me into the car. We were off!

It was impossible to talk, driving at a rate of forty miles an hour, and when Mr. Gregory slowed down by a roadside tea-house, I was really glad. His thin, tanned face and twinkling, brown eyes interested me, and I was anxious to talk.

I felt a little countrified and awkward with the dainty caviar sandwiches, and was sure that I was wrong when I put cream in my tea, only to find that he had taken lemon, but soon felt comfortable under the magnetism of his conversation.

He told me of his struggles through life, an early marriage, two children who had died, his wife's death a sudden boom, his first chemical discovery, and how tremendous success had followed quickly.

About all that he now cared for was his little girl, who had been in school in Paris for three years.

"I have my business fairly well organized, and I'm guilty of slipping off now and then; my friends are mostly casual, so I am alone a great deal. I want Carol to have the finest I can give her, so she is abroad. I can't have her with me now, but I will be glad when she comes back. I wonder if you would take pity on a lonely chap, and let me drive down and spend a day with you sometimes?"

"I should love it. You know, you really open up another world to me, and a teacher mustn't get into a rut."

Self-consciousness slipped away, and conversation came easily. When he drove me home, the sky was crimson with sunset.

"The sun is setting on the first day of our friendship, Miss Adams," he said.

After that he came many times, driving all the way over from Chicago, just for a few hours. I dared not tell my parents how I had met him, so it really was playing hooky.

One afternoon, several weeks later, under the leafy arbor of our roadside tea-house, he proposed. The great Clifford Gregory proposed to me. I had been unconsciously falling in love all the while, and the realization of just how

much I cared swept me off my feet. I accepted, regardless of everything. Then he made his plans.

On the morning following the last day of school, I met the big speedster at the bend in the road. Clifford had a heavy driving coat for me to slip on over my light frock, and we drove to Chicago.

A quiet ceremony, a beautiful platinum ring, a huge diamond, a bubbling, boyish, grey-haired bridegroom, the large town-car with liveried chauffeur, waiting to take us from the minister's house! What a romance had come to me! When the car rolled up the drive to the big, stone mansion, ablaze with light, and I was ushered into the spacious hall, with its perfume of a hot-house, and myriad blooms in bright jardinières, I was really frightened. I had never dreamed of seeing such magnificence.

The maid who hurried forward to divest me of the top coat, surveyed my plain, blue lawn dress, critically. She knew more about style and luxury than I! I was horribly conscious of my white canvas ties, which had looked so fresh in the schoolroom, but which sunk clumsily



"Dad, you'll have to take Sylvia. You two will enjoy it. Too

into these deep rugs. But I must forget my uneasiness! "Is everyone here?" Gregory's cheery voice boomed. "I want you all here to welcome Mrs. Gregory, my bride."

I HAD seen movies of wealthy men's brides who shook hands with the butler, and I blushed. Embarrassment heightened my reserve, and I bowed stiffly. The servants, each in his own way, made me appear comfortable, but I felt criticism in the air, and slight disapproval. They melted away discreetly, only the little maid remaining.

"Madame would wish to go to her room?"

I glanced at Clifford, afraid to leave him. He caught my hand quickly and kissed it.

"Of course, Lucy, you want to freshen up for dinner. We won't dress, tonight, as you haven't any clothes here, but take your time, dear."

I followed the maid up the great stairs, through the hall and into the boudoir which was to be mine. Two

enormous rooms, and a real bath, all of my own! The luxury and expense of everything fairly took my breath away. We had said at home that the farm had modern improvements, but this glistening bath of tiles and mirrors, showers and scales, a large, perfectly equipped room, and this bedroom with its rich mahogany, its



deep for Lucy and me, that modern stuff, anyhow."

silken shades and cushions, its lacy ruffles,—it was all a new world.

"I will take your hat, Madame," the girl said. "And you wish the bath warm?"

"Yes," I murmured, afraid of my own voice, as I gave her the imitation panama, with its blue silk scarf pinned on by an enamel blue-bird. I was not in the habit of taking baths at all hours, but if it had to be done, I was not at all unwilling. And, indeed, with exception of the embarrassment caused by Marie's presence when I had to take off the white petticoat, and other undergarments which were white and cotton, and bore pink bows, I enjoyed it. I was beginning to feel at home.

It seemed wonderful that love had come to me, and that it should be under such perfect circumstances. I resolved never to cause my dear Clifford one second of pain or discomfort, and to love his little daughter as my own. It would not be hard to love his child.

With these happy thoughts I descended to the library, where he was waiting. Dinner was a simple affair, in deference to me, I'm sure, but even so, the array of silver and glasses was a bit confusing. Clifford watched my efforts with a smile. I believe he enjoyed my lack of knowledge, for he loved simplicity.

In the library again, we turned on the radio.

"Do you dance, Lucy?"

"Not very well," I said.

"Play bridge?"

"No."

"Speak any French?"

"Just a little."

"Must learn. Carol speaks quite fluently. Oh, you can take lessons in all those things. Do you ride?"

"Oh, yes," I said; "I love to."

"That's fine! So do I. We have some wonderful horses. Play the piano?"

"Why, yes, I do," I was reluctant here, for though I was considered quite a pianist at home, I wondered if I would be good enough for him.

WILL you play for me now, Lucy? Anything at all," he took my hands and led me into the music room.

For the next two hours I played, old songs and new, some classics, and some old Southern melodies.

"Dear little girl," he said tenderly, as I stopped, "you make me so very happy. I never knew such joy existed for me. Are you happy, dear?"

I was, and my eyes and lips and heart all told him so. In the following week, I collected quite a wardrobe, Clifford shopping with me; we were like two children. My parents had taken the news of my elopement very graciously, especially after finding whom I had married.

News came from Carol to her father, a few months after our marriage, that she had received a proposal from a titled gentleman on the other side. Poor Clifford! He was dreadfully upset, declaring that she was only a baby, and ending by cabling her to come home. I was delighted at the thought of having a young girl around the house, and planned to make her love me so that she would forget this silliness of marrying a nobleman.

Then, one morning, while dressing my hair, Marie announced the arrival, on an early train, of Miss Carol! My heart leaped, and my cheeks grew warm with anticipation. Clifford's little girl was home at last. I knew how happy he would be. I was quite flurried as Marie brought me the simple grey flannel sport dress and smart brogues I selected for this clear cool

morning. I saw reflected in my glass a very different Lucy from the one whom Clifford Gregory had married. I was learning rapidly to fill the place as his wife.

Marie was busying herself in my rooms, as I slipped into the hall. From below the stairs I heard a shrill, girlish voice, raised in anger. I hesitated, and the words came up to me.

"It's outrageous! Oh, Daddy, have you no consideration for me? A cheap, common little school-teacher! To allow yourself to be roped in, and to bring her home! No doubt she will disgrace us."

THE words were cruel, and I waited numbly to hear my husband's reply.

"Now, Carol, dear," his voice was shaking, "Father knows what he is doing. She's a very sweet girl, and I married her because I love her. Please be nice."

Tears rushed to my eyes, and I leaned on the baluster. Yes, he loved me. But my happy dreams were crushed. Well, they should never know that I had heard. I would try to win her, anyway.

"You love her!" the hard voice shrilled back. "You are absolutely disgusting, at your age. You ought to be

ashamed, marrying some young girl. Oh, if I had been home it never would have happened."

"Now, Carol, hush! She'll be down any minute, and I want you to be nice. You'll love her, too, when you meet her."

"Oh, I'll be polite, but don't insult me. I don't expect to fall for a school-ma'am. I'm not so gullible."

After a few minutes of silence, I dried my eyes and went miserably down the stairs, determined to be brave. Hurt as I was, I was even more unhappy to think that I had caused this quarrel between father and daughter. They sat silently in the library when I entered, and Clifford rose and came to me, greeting me more than tenderly.

"Lucy, dear, my little girl has come home. This is Carol. Carol, I want you to meet your—your mother."

When the slim, blonde girl rose—and she was fully two inches taller than I—I seemed suddenly to have shrunk and become commonplace. She was positively patrician in her perfect, tailored frock, and with a cold expression on her face, simply looked up.

"How do you do, Lucy?" was all she said, and she didn't say it with a question mark.

From that minute my life was miserable. Though there was really no difference in our social worth, as far as blood was concerned, Carol treated me like the meanest servant. Worse, indeed.

And a servant mistreated may go, but my love for Clifford, and a vague hope that some day she might change toward me, held me. I tried in every way that I could

to please her, but nothing suited her. If I agreed with the things she said, she accused me of trying to be nice, or having no mind of my own, and if I dared to voice my own opinion, I was scorned.

Meals were the worst, for I could not escape her there, and her superior way of watching me all the time, and smiling knowingly when I became confused, made me more self-conscious than ever.

I can never forget one night, at a supper party, when her father was not present, and I looked guardedly at Carol to see which fork she was using for a fancy [Turn

to page 90]

"How do you do, Lucy?"
was all she said.





The Funniest Story I Know

as Told by
SMART SET Readers



C. B. P.,
New York City.

CALIPH: "And you say that in Rome the men as a rule have only one wife?"

Traveler: "Yea, my lord!"

Caliph: "What quiet, peaceful lives they must lead!"

* * * * *

L. B. B.,
Waterford, N. Y.

ON a railroad running through Massachusetts the company has recently equipped the section foremen with gasoline driven handcars. When Foreman Casey got his car he invited Foreman Murphy to take a ride. After they had got under way the starting-switch jammed and Casey couldn't stop the car. They tore along at a wild rate of speed, both men hanging on for dear life. Murphy remarked:

"Begorries, Casey, I'd give a hundred dollars to be off this car."

"Save your money," said Casey; "you'll be off at the next curve!"

* * * * *

M. M.,
Cleveland, Ohio.

MRS. JONES: "Why, have you been ill, Mrs. Smith?"

Mrs. Smith: "Oh, no! I've lost flesh because of worrying over my husband. He isn't a bit well."

Mrs. Jones: "Well, if I had a husband who wasn't well, I'd see to it that he had a doctor."

Mrs. Smith: "I will, as soon as I get down to 125 pounds!"



Mrs. W. E. R.,
Florence, Ala.

A NEGRO theatrical company was playing "Othello." The scene was reached where Othello demands the handkerchief from Desdemona. The leading man vociferously shouted:

"Desdimony, whar's dat hankerchief?" No response.

"Desdimony, I says, whar's dat hankerchief?" Again receiving no answer.

"Desdimony, fo' de third an' las' time. I says, whar's dat——"

At this juncture a small negro in the "peanut gallery piped out:

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, man, wipe yo' nose on yo' sleeve an' let de play go on!"

* * * * *

Mrs. V. H.,
New Florence, Pa.

THE beautiful wife of a Frenchman had never quite mastered the English language. She was urging a young American to attend a dinner, the invitation to which he had already declined.

She insisted that he go, but he couldn't see it that way, stating that he could not possibly do so as he had burned his bridges behind.

"That will be all right," she whispered; "I will lend to you a pair of my husband's."



Miss E. I. Y.,
Missileton, N. Y.

ED SMITH likes to think of himself as an efficient and high-powered type of business man. He wires his communications in terse telegrams, usually winding up with "Letter follows; will explain."

Ed recently became a proud father. He went to the telegraph office and sent the following wire to his wife's relatives:

TWINS TODAY MORE TOMORROW.

* * * * *

Mrs. E. W. C.,
Binghamton, N. Y.

JOAN: "Would you put yourself out for me?"

John: "I certainly would, dear."

Joan: "Well, please do so, then; it's 12 o'clock, and I'm awfully sleepy."

* * * * *

Mrs. E. R.,
Kansas City, Mo.

WHEN George Ade went abroad for the first time, the passage was a stormy one, and one evening, after dinner, when he was hanging over the side of the ship, after having had some vigorous moments with himself, a friend asked:

"Has the moon come up yet, George?"

"I don't know," said Ade. "It has if I ate it."

That's the Whole Trouble

*Here Is Another
Vital Problem in
a Girl's Life.*



I DON'T know what to do. The more I think, the more confused I become. I don't seem to be able to solve this perplexing problem of Lester, and I *must* reach a decision before he returns from his western trip, which will be some time this month.

I am an orphan, and except for some distant relatives in the Middle-West, I am entirely alone. I have nobody to advise me, or lift the burden from my shoulders. My very good friend, Myrtle—she and I generally advise each other in all important matters—is at present deeply involved in a love-affair of her own, and even if she were willing to take her mind off it, her suggestions wouldn't be worth much. All she has ever said, when I have attempted to discuss Lester with her, is:

"What do you care what happens, as long as you see him all the time!"

You see, her love-affair with Jerry is one of those mercurial proceedings. He rushes her violently for one week, assuring her of deep, everlasting devotion, and then—well—she doesn't hear from him for perhaps two weeks or more. So, you can readily understand why Myrtle thinks any steady romance is desirable, and should be left as it is.

I can't turn to my other girl friends—you know what they're like when it comes to giving advice—and my men friends aren't any help in a case like this. The only other person I have is—Lester! But that is the whole trouble: I don't know whether I *have* Lester or not. Perhaps you'll be able to answer that question for me after I tell you our story.

I met Lester last summer up in the Adirondacks, where I was spending my vacation with Myrtle and her mother, who had been ill. I was having a wonderful time swimming, playing tennis, dancing, and doing all the other things that are expected at a summer resort. You know

what the average mountain resort hotel is like: there are many girls and very few men, which means that the men are swamped by feminine attention.

Myrtle was absorbed in Jerry—she had chosen this particular spot for her mother to recuperate; she knew Jerry would be there for part of his vacation—and I was rather bored, as I wasn't interested in anybody. The male element consisted of a group of young boys, the silly, collegiate kind. Although I don't look it, as I'm very

petite and slender, with naturally-waved bobbed hair, which seems to give me the air of carelessness and youth, I am twenty-six, which is a little too old for playing the rôle of the "Flapper Boys' Delight!" But to pass the time, I played around with these youngsters.

The spot we'd chosen was really beautiful, and the clear sunshine and invigorating air seemed glorious to me after having been shut up in the city for the long winter and spring. The days passed pleasantly enough; I was happy being out-doors; even the silly

youths with their perpetual wise-cracks failed to annoy me; but when it came to the evening and dancing, I was miserable!

I love to dance, but I did get tired of that "cheek to cheek" business and the everlasting "toddle." And the customary invitation to take a "walk" around the lake, which came as inevitably as the next hour. It didn't make any difference with whom you were dancing, or how attached to some pretty, pert [Turn to page 94]

*"Oh, Leila," he moaned,
pressing me frantically.
"I'm so unhappy . . .
so lonely . . . my poor
wife . . .!"*

I gasped!



Her Honeymoon

Letter Continues

".....and everywhere you go in Vienna—the tea dances, the opera, the fashionable Night Clubs, you see this gorgeous new rouge—so brilliant, so absolutely glowing with the joy of living! In Paris it is the same—everyone is wearing it. I tried to get some. But it wasn't the shade. Not until I got to London was I able to get the right shade. It is called PRINCESS PAT Vivid. Do try to get some. With your eyes it will be wonderful."

Affectionately,
Doris.

Your Rosy Dreams Come True

when you add the fire of youth, the glow of life which this wondrous new color brings

Princess Pat VIVID, the gorgeous, intense rose rouge that is creating such a furore in European fashion centers is just now making its debut among the smartest women of America. They realize, as no doubt you do, the need of a more brilliant shade of rouge amid the modern colorful surroundings.

Under evening lights amid the blazing color tones in costumes and decorations, this vivid shade brings out your beauty, emphasizes the loveliness of your features and adds brilliance to the lustre of your eyes.

Yet under strong daylight, used sparingly and softly blended with powder you will find PRINCESS PAT VIVID Rouge the true rose tone of your own natural blush. You must try it.

Should your dealer temporarily be out of PRINCESS PAT VIVID, do not accept a substitute. We will gladly send you a week's supply without charge so that you may prove how this wonderful shade brings out your beauty as no rouge ever did before. Merely send the coupon. There is absolutely no obligation.



PRINCESS PAT
VIVID

Princess Pat

PRINCESS PAT, Ltd. - Chicago, U. S. A.

Princess Pat Lipstick

As a final touch to your beauty it is essential that the color harmony between lips and cheeks should be exact. With English Tint or Medium Rouge use Princess Pat "Natural" Lipstick; with Vivid Rouge, use Princess Pat "Vivid" Lipstick. Keeps the lips soft and pliant—prevents dryness or chap.

Free You are invited to try this wonderful new shade of rouge on your own complexion entirely without expense. We are glad to send a generous trial supply for thorough test with various gowns in both day and evening light. You will find no other rouge ever brought out your beauty so emphatically.

JUST MAIL THE COUPON

PRINCESS PAT, Ltd., Dept. 248, 2709 S. Wells St., Chicago.
In Canada, address: 107 Duke St., Toronto, Ontario.

Please send me entirely free, a sample of your new VIVID Rouge.

Name.....

Address.....

As Though I Cared!

[Continued from page 20]

we walked in the park that bordered the river. Away from the lights, away from people, away from everyone and everything but our own consciences. Our lips clung until it seemed my senses left me, and then I waited for a clap of fire and thunder.

After a moment she put her face close down against my shoulder and I heard her whisper, "I love you, Phil."

And I asked, "As much as I love you, Elsie?" and she pressed closer into my arms.

"But we mustn't," she whispered.

After I took her home I stole like a thief to my place beside Nita. She was asleep and I didn't wake her, for I never could have looked into her eyes.

I didn't see Elsie for three days. Three days of torture and self-accusation, and Nita's smile and concern about my health. One minute I was determined to put Elsie out of my mind forever, and the next I could feel her warm, young lips pressing mine; I determined to tell Nita and have it over.

The third evening Nita sat down on the arm of my chair as I pretended to read the paper. She put her hand on my forehead and I closed my eyes. After a moment she bent down and lightly touched my lips and then whispered into my ear, "You'd better tell me what it is, dear. You can't go on much longer with it bottled up inside you."

I opened my eyes and looked into her face and she smiled at me with that assuring, confident, understanding smile. Then she waited while I screwed up my courage.

"I would rather do anything in the world than hurt you, Nita," I began. Then I stopped. That sounded foolish, because I was going to hurt her as she had never been hurt before, as she never would be again probably.

"I know, dear," she smiled.

That gave me courage and I started again. "It's Elsie, Nita. Elsie and I. I—I—we love each other." Looking quickly up I saw the color drain from her face. She brushed a hand over her eyes and when it came down there were tears in the corners, and the expression was one of wonder and amazement.

"Elsie and you!" she said, tensely.

"Yes," I said. The dazed expression began to go from her face and in a moment she was crying as though her heart would break. What could I do? My touch wouldn't comfort her—I had no right to touch her. So I waited in heartless, stony silence. Finally she crossed the room and, sitting down, rested her head against the back of the chair. Then she began:

PHIL, I'll be as brave as you have been.

Up to now I have been the coward. You have made my way easy, and I have always believed that I was stronger than you. You are a hero, Phil, three times over.

"It's wrong, Phil, but it can't be helped. I have gone through hell in the past few months but love wins, Phil—it always wins." I listened uncomprehending. Then, after some hesitation, she blurted:

"Phil, Dave and I have loved each other for months—wait! I've got to finish now!"

"I always thought that nothing in all the world could come between you and me, Phil. You have always, for so long as I can remember, seemed to be a part of me. I have loved you since I was old enough to know love, and I always shall. But this thing between Dave and me is something different. It is the love that sur-

passes anything in life. You can't fight it; I know, for I've tried. But it has eaten me up. I have managed to go on until now, refusing to hurt you.

"Now it is all so simple if we have the courage of our love."

I remember that I got to my feet and stood staring at her, refusing to believe that I had heard her rightly. And she looked into my eyes, unflinching. Finally I said:

"You and Dave love each other—my friend—" I tried to catch that last word, but Nita heard it and the first hard, metallic laugh I had ever heard came from her lips.

YOUR friend and you are traitors to each other, Phil," she answered. "Dave was willing to go on for you and for me. Oh, I know how you feel. And now you know how I've felt for the past few months. The awful torture of it! I thought I would go mad because I couldn't justify it. Even now I don't understand, but that doesn't matter. It's over, thank God, it's over!"

Rising, Nita came over and took my face between her hands and kissed me on the lips.

"I hope you'll be as happy as I hope to be, Phil," and before I could speak she had gone up the stairs to her room. I heard the lock turn on her door and in a moment the downstairs connection of the telephone tingled and I knew that she was calling Dave on the phone.

Something made me want to rush upstairs and stop her. But instead, I got my hat and walked for miles and then went home to toss on my bed until day-break. Thinking, thinking, thinking... jealous, white hot at moments. It was all so unreal. The futility of everything overcame me; the futility of human beings and their lives—as though the world or anyone cared for more than a day! Life was what you took for yourself. And I fell asleep.

The next morning when I went downstairs everything looked strange to me. Nita looked drawn and wan, but she smiled at me cheerily, like a hostess where I was a guest.

At breakfast we said a few sentences and Nita told me she was going in to her mother's that day and that I could get her there on the phone if there was anything I wished to talk over.

After breakfast I looked at my watch, as I had for the past six months, listened for my train to whistle at the town above, got the paper off the front porch, kissed Nita lightly on the lips, and went to work. Like any other morning, only it was a new world, strangely changed.

When I got in town I phoned Elsie and met her for luncheon. I wondered just how she was going to take it—about Dave. When I began in a faltering way to tell her, she smiled and said:

"Silly, I've known it for weeks. I tried to tell you but you wouldn't let me." I felt a little surge of anger as I realized that I had been the only one who didn't know.

"Have you ever talked with Dave about it?" I asked.

"We have never mentioned it," she answered. "He thinks I don't know. But his eyes have been devouring Nita and lying to me for months."

I can't explain the next few months. The whole world seemed to change. Nita had been mine from the time I could walk, helping me as a kid, keeping up my courage and guiding me through those awful days in France, helping me get a foothold

in business—always a part of me. It seemed as though I had been taken up bodily and put down again in the world as someone else—someone I had never even known before.

Within the next few months Nita and I straightened things out in regards to our divorce. We quite often, all four of us, ran into each other at the home of some friend. Everyone spoke of us as being "modern"—a "modern marriage" they called it. And once I almost snapped at Elsie when she gayly told someone that ours would be a "modern marriage." After that I tried to keep Elsie away from our old crowd because I didn't like the way people said things about us before our face—jokingly, of course, but it all seemed to lack good taste.

Two weeks before the final decree of our divorce was signed I had to go to Chicago on a business trip. In the lobby of my hotel there I met one of my fellow workers during the war. He was still designing planes for our old company and insisted that I run out to their flying field and take a hop in a two-seater that had just been assembled. I laughed at his invitation. Flying held no charm for me after my last flight in France. But I finally yielded to his insistence and rode, protestingly, out to inspect his plane. I told him I would fly in it if it were anchored to the clouds, and he proved that it was absolutely foolproof.

But when I arrived there and saw the beauty of the little monoplane that glistered in the sun, I couldn't resist its lure. So I strapped myself in, they spun the propeller, the switch clicked, she caught. In a moment they kicked out the blocks, the pilot "gave her the gun," and we went skimming along over the ground, taking the air with the speed of a bullet.

Ahead of us was a grove of trees. Confident that the pilot would swing to the right, and not realizing our terrific speed, we struck the topmost branches before I had time to be alarmed. Her nose went down, something struck me in the back of the neck, and that was all I knew...

I HEARD a voice that sounded far away, as though I were awakening from a dream. I struggled to bring myself to consciousness; the voice soft and low and sweet was crooning, "My Phil, my Phil," over and over. I opened my eyes and looked into Nita's. Her face seemed to light up and she reached for my hand and pressed it against her lips; then a nurse lifted her from my bed where she had fallen forward, and helped her out of the room while a towering, fierce looking doctor came in to say, "Well, she did what we couldn't do, sonny."

I smiled at him and he gave me something that put me to sleep again.

The next day they told me that I had been unconscious for four days; that I had called for Nita, in my delirium; that the papers had made up a sensational story concerning me.

There isn't anything more to my story, only that Nita wired that day and cancelled her divorce proceedings.

"What a fool I've been," she started to say; and I interrupted her to say, "I've been the fool, dear, because I didn't fight for you."

"We both ran into temptation and weren't strong enough to fight it. But that's past. I told Dave a week ago that I would never marry him and he wired me yesterday that Elsie would—as though I cared. Nothing in all the world will ever matter but you, Phil, just you, my first and last and always lover."

Maria's Story

[Continued from page 46]

care for him. And besides, dearest, he brought you to America, and if it had not been for him I would never have known you. We have been happy, Maria."

What qualities he had! What fineness of perception and what a great sympathetic soul was in that man of short stature—"that clever little lawyer," as he was dubbed in his profession.

John began making money, and big money. Some of the retainer fees which he received staggered me. He bought us a fine house. I had a car and a summer home. I had everything—everything but my baby. The years rolled on. We celebrated our silver wedding. Silvio and Maria married; then my young John married.

OUR hair—John's and mine—whitened. To make me laugh, John sang "Silver Threads Among the Gold," although my hair had been inky black. And he always swore that I was prettier with white hair than I had been with the black. John always was chivalrous.

Then came another mile-stone. Silvio's wife had a baby. I couldn't stay away from the house—and a girl baby, too. I used every excuse to get my daughter-in-law to live in my home so that I might be near my little granddaughter.

That winter when Silvio and his wife had an invitation to go South, my cup of happiness overflowed; we had the baby with us for six weeks.

And when the baby left, I was so desolated that it meant the start of my breakdown. I think it was the separation from that child. For then it settled on me. That great longing for my own baby came upon me with such force that I completely wilted; I was a sick woman, with no organic trouble; although I was not young—for I was a woman of sixty—it was too early to go to pieces as I did.

The doctors were puzzled. John was depressed over the great change which had taken place in me. My children were worried to death and held secret conferences over me. How sweet they were to see that I was never alone!

Finally my daughter-in-law, whom I loved like a daughter, discovered that the baby brightened me up, so every afternoon my little granddaughter was brought to see me. That was the bright spot in the day.

Then came a time when I finally collapsed and confessed my worry. It happened one evening; it was on my birthday. All of the children came for dinner. I made a great effort to be natural and show the happiness which I should—even wore a new dress, and put on my earrings.

I felt faint; my head felt heavy. I rested it against the tall back of the chair. I made a gesture to rise. Silvio was at my side in a moment; John jumped up and came around to me.

"What is it, Mother? Are you sick?" "Take her up-stairs," said Maria, taking charge.

They took me into my room. John held my hand as I lay on the sofa; I looked at him. He knew that what was in my mind was only for him. We were so close; he knew my every change of expression.

"Leave your mother with me, children," he said as he gently shoos my big boys and girls out of the door.

Then he fell on his knees beside me, took my hand, stroked my face and asked: "What is it, Maria mia?"

I lurched forward in his arms, clasped my hands tightly around his neck and sobbed: "John, find her for me."

John straightened up and looked at me. "Is that it, Maria, my poor girl?"

He jumped to his feet and commenced pacing the room. He stopped and lit a cigar. Then he walked back and forth several times, and in a few moments came over to the sofa and sat down beside me.

"Maria," he said, "tomorrow I start to find your daughter. If it is humanly possible I will bring her to you."

That night I slept for the first time in months. In the morning when I awoke, it was with a great hope. I even wanted my breakfast, and ate it with a relish.

Then John started. I had seen him attack a case—for that is the way he did things. When he was in a big suit, he threw himself so completely into it and worked so unceasingly and furiously that I used to think the other side might as well save themselves the expense and time of an open case before a judge and jury, and settle it out of court.

"I'm off, dear," said John, coming in to kiss me good-by. "Now my girl must be happy. Perhaps I will have some news for you tonight."

He always called me his girl, and I felt like it now more than ever, because I was depending upon him more than I ever had in my life. He was going to find my baby for me. If I didn't see her I knew that I could not recover from the miserable state into which I had slumped.

That night I waited feverishly for John's home-coming. I knew that I never could have found the name of the people who had adopted my child; I had gone once to the hospital to inquire, but was told that the records were confidential and could not be given out.

I worried all that day for fear John would meet with the same rebuff. But down in my heart I felt that he could do something. He could always do something. Hadn't he the skill and knowledge and power? Hadn't he through his cleverness and remarkable ability saved many persons from financial failure, disgrace and prison?

I heard the front door bang and his step on the stair. I waited. He kissed me.

"Well, John?" I asked timidly.

"I inquired at the hospital today, Maria. The records cannot be seen by any casual person inquiring," he answered.

My heart sank. I knew this, but when I heard the word "but" pronounced by him, I took courage.

BUT, I think there is a way to find out.

I consulted a judge of the Children's Court today—a friend of mine. The records may possibly be reached by him through the Children's Society."

"Thank God," I murmured. At least there was hope.

"Tomorrow, I think we can get the name," he added.

Tomorrow I would know the name which my daughter bore. Again I slept well.

Those days of waiting were not bad. They had a thrill in them. I had been waiting forty years to see my baby, and now I felt that I would—because my husband had promised me that if it were possible he would find her. And his word was his bond.

"I've got the name, Maria," he said, bending over me the following evening. She was adopted by a Mr. and Mrs. Emmet Hill of Buffalo."

"Hill," I repeated. "Buffalo." I had heard her name.

"I've sent a good man up there on to-

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night's train. He'll be back in a few days with a report," said John.

I just shook my head and smiled into his eyes. I could not find words to make any expression. How quickly he worked. What a wonderful thing it was to have such a husband as John. No wonder he stood in the front ranks of his profession and had more business than he could manage.

Several days passed. I didn't ask any questions. I tried to hold on to myself. Sometimes I felt that it was hopeless, and then other times I had a great feeling that I would see my daughter. I was in a state of conflict in my mind and soul.

The man returned and, since the train on which he had traveled arrived after office hours, came directly to the house to see my husband. He was ushered into our library. I was introduced, and then he gave his report to John.

"Both Mr. and Mrs. Emmet Hill are dead. Their house is sold and no one of the family living in Buffalo," he announced.

"No one of the family living in Buffalo—"... I felt a weakness coming over me. Was she dead, too? Oh, no—no! He continued:

"Now, I talked to several of the neighbors who lived nearby and they remembered the daughter—several of them remembered her wedding."

She was married! My heart started thumping; I was hearing news of my baby girl. Think of it. I was hearing something about her! I couldn't believe it. Even that made my breath come quickly. John didn't speak. Neither did I.

"It's a rather difficult case," said the detective, "but there is just a chance that we can find something to start with. For one old lady said she had a daughter living in Des Moines who used to play with Margaret—"

"Margaret—Margaret Hill!" I'd heard her name. I clutched my trembling hands tightly together.

"And," continued the man, "this old lady said that she sometimes heard from Margaret years ago, but she did not know whether she was still in touch with her. The old lady did not know Margaret's married name. But she thought she had married a foreigner, because the Hills traveled a great deal."

Married a foreigner, and traveled. To think that that baby of mine had traveled and was married. It had been so hard for me to imagine her as anything but a baby.

"I've wired out to the daughter and hope for a reply tomorrow," said the detective. "Is there anything else, Mr. Street?"

"No, thank you," replied John. "You've done very well. Let me know at once when you have news."

"You're looking better, Maria," said John as we went up-stairs...

"Better than I've been for several years, John, dear; I think I can get well now," I answered.

THE next day I didn't have to wait until evening to hear the report of the detective. John called me up within an hour after he left the house.

"We've got her name, Maria. She married an Italian cavalry officer by the name of Sabatini, and the last time she was heard of was about ten years ago from Florence."

My heart sank. Then John's voice again:

"That's very good. We have something to work on—far easier than if she had married a private citizen. I've booked passage on Saturday's steamer for Silvio to go over and examine the records of the Army. His Italian will help to simplify matters. Are you all right?"

Was I all right? Wasn't every day bringing me hope and courage and strength?

I sat down and thought. My Silvio going to Italy to find his sister! My boy going to find her for me! And she had married one of our countrymen and knew what the land of Silvio's and mine looked like. Was she still there? Oh, yes. For several years I had on many occasions experienced a strange feeling that my daughter wanted to see me. Sometimes I would dismiss it as a freak of imagination. But, nevertheless, it was that feeling which dispelled the awful doubt of her being dead when it stealthily crept into my mind.

Silvio called. When he kissed me goodbye he said:

"Now, Mother, keep well. Don't worry. I'll find her."

I GAVE him the little sacred medal which our village priest had given me when Silvio and I set sail for America, and went to church to burn candles for his safe journey and for success in his undertaking.

Then came the cable that he had arrived at Naples. Several days passed. Then came another cable from Rome, reading:

COLONEL SABATINI RETIRED ADDRESS TOMORROW SILVIO

There was always something to look forward to these days, and I seemed to shake off the years. My children and John were so happy over my improvement that our home fairly radiated the great happiness which was mine.

The next day Silvio's cable read:

LOCATED IN FLORENCE LEAVING TONIGHT SILVIO

I was so excited that I was almost childish in my joy. I smiled continually and wanted to kiss everyone who came near me.

In two days came this message:

MARGARET AND HER FAMILY SAILING WITH ME ON THE DUILIO ON SATURDAY

I could hardly control myself; my joy was unbounded. I was in the same state that I was when Silvio told me that we would be married and go to America.

Margaret and her family! Did he mean her husband? Oh, no; a family meant more than a husband. She must have at least one child. My little girl coming with her family!

I thought that week would never pass. I began getting the house ready—like I had for the girls' weddings. Everything must be just so. I went to the florist and ordered flowers. I would telephone the day they were to be sent—when I would know the time of the arrival of the *Duilio*.

I examined the dress which I planned to wear; I thought of a delicious dinner to have that night; I arranged the guest rooms. How many would I need?

I was the busiest and happiest woman in the world—and yet how leaden were those days.

Every morning I turned to the shipping news. I searched the column marked "Maritime Intelligence" for that charmed name *Duilio*, which was bringing the child of my heart across the ocean to me.

I thought of Silvio and Margaret sitting on the deck and talking about our lives, and wondered if Margaret asked many questions about me.

Then came the morning when I read in the paper that the *Duilio* from Naples was due on Tuesday.

Monday night I went to bed. Everything had been attended to; there was nothing left undone. I couldn't sleep; I was like a little girl waiting for Christmas morning. I welcomed the dawn with joy, and got up—grateful to see the sun streaking the sky. No fog... No storm... She might dock on time.

[Turn to page 78]



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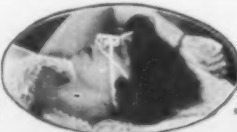
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Maria's Story

[Continued from page 76]

Breakfast . . . Telephoning the florist . . . Arranging the flowers around the house and in Margaret's room and in the room for the child. Or was it children? I prepared for two, at any rate. Then John telephoned me:

"Dulio's at Quarantine. Will be up the bay in two hours and dock about noon."

Oh, God, I'll see her today. I'll hold my daughter to my breast. I'll hear her call me mother. Wonder how she will arrive? Will I meet them all at once? Can I stand it?

Noon . . . One o'clock . . . John telephoned:

"We'll be up in an hour, Mother. Eat your lunch; they've had theirs."

Just think! I was hearing about my daughter! She lived . . . and ate lunch . . . and was coming to me! I couldn't swallow a bite; I drank a cup of tea and then went to my room; I looked into the mirror and smoothed my hair.

The hour was up. It was two o'clock. I went down to the library . . . Half-past two. I heard the car stop at the door. I heard the door open. John's step on the stair. He came in and kissed me.

"She's here, Mother. I've brought her to you." Then he went out of the room.

I arose to my feet and held on to the chair. I waited for a moment, watching the door. Then I saw her. She stood there in the doorway between the red velvet curtains. She stood there—my daughter—a glorious woman, looking at me with Silvio's eyes.

WE STOOD rigid for a few moments. I held firmly to the chair. Then as if one mind thought, we walked toward each other.

Her arms were around me; my arms were around her neck. My head was on her breast; I felt her strong arms tighten on me.

Our faces met. We kissed. My cheek was on hers. Our tears mingled as if they had come from one source.

How long we stood there I do not know. Then she led me to the sofa and we sat down. Not a word was spoken for I don't know how long. We simply sat there, holding each other's hands and looking into each other's souls.

Then Margaret spoke. She took my face in both of her hands and said:

"Mother!"

I looked into Silvio's eyes, for they were his eyes, and whispered:

"My baby!"

I took her hand in mine—Silvio's beautiful hand—and caressed it. The last time I had held that hand was when I nursed her for the last time in the hospital, and felt her tiny fingers grip mine.

Soon the door opened and all her brothers and sisters came rushing in, having held back for our meeting.

She told us of the kind people who had brought her up, whom she had regarded as her own mother and father until shortly before her foster mother's death. Mrs. Hill had called Margaret to her bedside and related the whole story of how she came into the family.

It was at that time that I felt her calling me through space, and in the deep recesses of my soul.

Our souls had been reaching out and trying to find each other.

She told me of her marriage and of her gallant husband . . . I looked at the clock. It was three o'clock.

"My goodness, darling. You must go to your room."

"And you must meet Victor and see the children, Mother," she laughed, as we rose

and walked toward the door. I laughed as I thought that I had forgotten everything in the whole world except my daughter.

However, we couldn't get to the door, for just then Margaret remembered to tell me how easy it had been for her to learn Italian and how strange everyone thought it was, the facility with which she spoke the language.

We started again and as we walked out of the room we passed the piano.

"There, Margaret," I said softly, pointing to Silvio's violin, "there is your father's violin. He poured his very life out on that violin."

Margaret laid her strong, beautiful, white hand on the violin—that hand like Silvio's, with a gesture so magnificent and yet so tender that she might have laid it on his worried brow.

Then we went up to my sitting room, and there in a big chair was John with a dear little girl of seven sitting on his knees and chatting away in Italian; and by his side a nine boy of five—both with Silvio's black curly hair and dreamy eyes.

Standing in front of them was a handsome, big, dashing cavalry officer, with that unmistakable brave bearing of a regular military man—just the kind I had gazed at rapturously as they galloped through our village when I was a little girl.

I saw in a glance that he and Margaret were deeply in love with each other, and when I kissed him I felt I was kissing a newly found son.

And those children! What laughing! What questions! What explanations! There hadn't been so much Italian spoken in our house since I could remember.

And how pleasantly it fell upon my eager ears!

That night all of the children were there for dinner. Never shall I forget it. How beautiful everything was. The table was as pretty as the night of my birthday when the children had made such a gala occasion of it—the night I asked John to find her for me.

I sat there as happy as a girl. I looked around the table. It was complete. It was the first time that fearful emptiness had left my heart. I smiled as I counted each and every one—all of my loved ones; and my Margaret—my baby—sitting between her brother and sister, laughing and talking as if they had known each other all their lives!

I CLOSED my eyes for a moment and breathed a prayer of thankfulness, with a silent entreaty that Silvio could look down and see us.

We spent a happy evening—so happy that it did not seem earthly. Then Margaret said:

"Don't you think we'd better go to bed, Mother dear?"

"I'll come up while you undress, darling, and see if everything is all right in your room."

I sat in a big chair while my beautiful daughter prepared for bed. Then she sat for a moment on the arm of my chair and held my face close to her shoulder.

Suddenly she fell on her knees by me. How lovely she was in her deep red dressing-gown, with her black hair falling about her shoulders.

She looked at me with Silvio's eyes and then hesitated; she put her head on my knee for a moment and then raised her face and whispered:

"Hear my prayers, Mother, and tuck me in."

THE END.

The Last Mile-Stone

[Continued from page 66]

say, "Poor old Billy—she doesn't understand you." By "she", Viola meant Helen; and by the little pressure of her fingers she meant that she, Viola, did understand me. It was true in a way, too. She knew my needs and she played on them until I was clay to her touch.

The first time I kissed Viola it frightened me, made me realize how far ahead I was straying.

We had been to the theater together and I was taking her home in a taxi. The play had been an emotional, dramatic thing that had stirred us; and in the semi-darkness of the cab I felt Viola's hand in mine. Another minute I had her in my arms and my lips were on hers. Just then we drew up to the curb outside her apartment house and the driver was opening the door. Without a word to me she descended to the pavement and disappeared into the house.

All the way home my head was in a whirl. My conscience reared its head, accusing me. I told myself I had done Helen a wrong. I made up my mind that I would not see Viola again until I had myself in hand. If only Helen had been awake when I arrived home I think I would have told her everything and perhaps saved both of us much future suffering; but she was sleeping quietly, a smile on her lips, and I did not wake her.

It was the following morning at exactly eleven o'clock—I remember the way the office clock looked at the time, as one often remembers comparatively unimportant things—that the president of the company came in and asked me if I could sail for Europe the next day. "Dobson was going," he said to me; "we have passage engaged for him and his wife—and now Dobson is in the hospital with appendicitis, and we are in the deuce of a fix. We must have a representative at that conference in London on the twenty-fifth, and you are the next man in line. Awfully sorry not to give you more notice, but Mrs. Jordan may enjoy the trip, and it is bound to do you good." He gave me a kindly, fatherly pat on the shoulder. "You've been looking tired lately. This trip may be just the thing for you."

I went home early that night. It seemed to me that the thing was providential. We had a good nurse for the baby; Helen's mother was in town and could superintend things. And Helen and I could go away together and straighten out our tangled affairs in a renewed honeymoon.

HELEN was out when I arrived; but half an hour later she came in and started directly for the nursery. I intercepted her and drew her into the living-room.

From an inner pocket I drew out two steamer tickets.

"For us," I beamed. "All on the firm. We're to go to London—"

"Billy Jordan!" she cried. "Are you perfectly, absolutely mad?"

"Never was saner in my life." And I told her about the conference in London, about Dobson's illness, about the president's words to me.

She was silent as I finished. And thinking her silence meant consent, I took her into my arms, hungrily, eagerly. "Darling," I murmured huskily, "things haven't been right between us. This will be our second honeymoon, starting us on the right track again. I'm so—so awfully happy about it."

Helen's laugh was soft and silvery; but it chilled me as, musically, it rang through the little room.

"Billy—you're a blessed old idiot. Now, how on earth can I go away at a moment's

notice and leave behind me a thousand engagements and a perfectly good baby. Why, I could no more leave Baby alone with the nurse than I could fly out of the window!"

"But your mother—" I began.

"Mother!" There was a world of affectionate scorn in her voice. "Mother thinks I am heartless because I don't rock him to sleep. She has never heard of modern, scientific baby training. Why, with the best intentions she'd ruin him in a week."

My arms dropped to my sides, and she stepped away from me.

"Your mother brought up five children of her own," I muttered, and none of you seemed to have suffered greatly from her methods."

"More good luck than good management," she laughed.

SHE walked prettily to the door. Then at the threshold she turned as if struck anew by the absurdity of my suggestion. "You're an old idiot," she said for the second time.

Her words, and more particularly her manner, sent my hopes for an understanding flying into a thousand bits at my feet. If I had not hoped so much from the trip, if I had not loved her so deeply, I do not think I would have cared so much. She maddened me. I wanted to hurt her as much as she had hurt me.

I stopped her just as she was turning into the hall. My voice was so harsh that I hardly recognized it as my own. Certainly, it was the first time I had ever spoken to her like that.

"Stop!" I cried. "Come back here. You cannot dismiss me so lightly, Helen. I—I have a few things to say."

She came back slowly, amazement in every beautiful line of her. But I rushed on, driven by the surging anger within me.

"For months you've treated me as if I hardly existed. You've taken me as much for granted as you have the dining-room table or the kitchen chairs. You've left me to seek outside the relaxation every man needs—you haven't cared how or where. You've neglected our friends. And now you refuse to take this trip with me. Very well. If you won't go with me, there is another woman who will. Thank God, all women are not icicles; some have warm human blood in their veins—not ice water. If I can't get what I want, I'll take what I can get." And with that I walked blindly past her, out into the hall, and into our bedroom. There I shut the door. To my surprise, I found myself trembling.

With nervous haste I filled a bag with things I should need on the steamer. Then going back into the hall, I took my hat and overcoat from the rack. Bag in hand I walked to the front door and, without a word, out of the front door and down to the street.

I had an uncertain impression of Helen standing inside the living-room, leaning against the table just as I had left her, staring after me with wide-open, frightened eyes. But it did not register. I was befuddled with anger and hurt and disappointment.

In my room at the hotel I called up Viola.

"Can you come away with me—tomorrow?" I wasted no time in preliminaries. I was abrupt and harsh. "I have to go to England; I want you to go with me."

There was no amazement in Viola's tones. She was the sort of woman to whom abruptness was stimulating—a kind

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of adventure. She, like myself, wasted no time in preliminaries. "Yes," she said in a low, excited voice, "I'll go. I can get ready tonight and meet you—"

"Meet me on the steamer," I interrupted. "It's the Romeric, sailing at twelve. Say you are Mrs. Jordan—it will save explanations. You'll find everything arranged for. You're—you're a dear, Viola." And I rang off.

I knew that I had called Viola a "dear" more from a sense of what was expected of me than from a sense of conviction. I could feel no thrill at the idea of the journey with her. I was obsessed by loneliness—and a gnawing longing for Helen. Only pride kept me from going back to ask her, once again, to come with me.

The following morning I went down to the office to receive my last instructions. Every one exclaimed over the seediness of my looks. "You need a change if ever a man did," they told me. The president shook my hand warmly and said: "Remember me to Mrs. Jordan. Tell her you need looking after." If I felt contrite at deceiving the kindly old man I did not show it. I was like a man living through a nightmare.

As I boarded the steamer I heard a flapper standing by the rail giggle. "That man looks seasick before he starts," she said to her companion. I smiled grimly when I saw she was referring to me.

I went right down to my stateroom. The firm had done well by me—I found that I had been assigned two connecting cabins with a bath between. I found the door of the first room locked, so I took the second and asked the stewardess if Mrs. Jordan had arrived. She said, "Yes." And added that the lady appeared very tired and had left word that she would like to be undisturbed until luncheon. I shrugged my shoulders. Viola was giving me an exhibition of her temperament.

It was not until we had passed beyond the Statue of Liberty and Staten Island that I looked at my watch and saw it was one o'clock. With a sigh, I realized that I must go below and pretend to Viola that I was glad to see her.

I DID not knock on her cabin door, but I went directly to my own. As I crossed the threshold and entered, I saw a woman standing by the port-hole. I stared, rubbing my eyes. I thought I had become the victim of a delusion. The woman was not Viola. She looked like Helen.

She turned when she heard the door close. "Billy!"

The minute she spoke I knew she was real—real and beautiful and human.

"Billy, can you forgive me? I—I've been such a fool."

The next thing I knew she was in my arms.

"I never realized what a fool I'd been until you told me yesterday," she continued, breathlessly; "I—I hated myself. I would have given anything I possessed to get you back and beg you to take me with you. I knew that Baby would be safe with Mother. Then that—that woman called you up. She thought you had telephoned from the apartment and she wanted to ask you something. I guess that she was the woman you meant; and I told her she need not bother to prepare for the trip because I, not she, was going with you. I said many things to her, Billy—terrible things. I didn't know they were in me. She just faded away. I—I—"

"Darling," I murmured, interrupting her, "can you ever forgive me? I think I hated her all the time. It was just because I thought you didn't care. A sort of madness."

"We'll never make a mistake like that again—either of us," she said.

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My Little World

[Continued from page 15]

they would wink and give their head a little wise nod, which might have meant most anything. But it left me blushing and confused.

After dinner, during which my oldest sister said, "Now, for heaven's sake, don't throw yourself at him," I slipped out and walked down the back way to the station. Quite a few of our crowd were there already, along with the usual town characters that hung about to meet every train. There was a little lull in the conversation for a moment when I arrived, and I heard one of those high cackly laughs which meant that some lounge had made a suggestive remark. I saw Helen Adams, our librarian, throw an infuriated glance in his direction, then she came over and put an arm about my waist and said, "One lucky little girl is happy today, isn't she?" If towns like Granville were only made up of such women as Helen Adams!

When the one-thirty whistled for the grade crossing below town, there must have been as many as seventy-five people there waiting to greet Larry. Little tremors of fear left me alternately hot and cold. My handkerchief was wringing wet from the perspiration on my hands, and my cheeks were flushed and hot from the sun that beat down on the dry platform planks. Mr. and Mrs. Mason came whirling up in their barouche, behind a pair of powerful greys, just as the train came thundering up to the station, and came squeaking and wheezing to a trembling halt.

Necks were craned, trying to peer into the car windows. Someone shouted, "There he is!" and Larry's towering form came through the car door. And then, directly behind him, two delicious little dimples playing at the corners of her mouth, came a girl. Something seemed to drop from my heart to the pit of my stomach, leaving me shaking and afraid. A cloud as dark as night seemed to pass before the sun, and when I tried to smile and look happy there weren't any smiles left where smiles come from.

I wanted to bend down behind sheltering skirts and skulk away alone. Then, in a sort of daze, I saw Larry kiss his mother and shake his father's hand and introduce them to the girl. Then I saw him push his way through the mob of people that surrounded him, suddenly looming up before me. His smile seemed to be in my very eyes as he gathered me into his arms and kissed me!

All sound seemed to stop for a moment—just perfect contentment. Larry's lips! Larry had come home and had claimed me!

IN another moment Larry introduced me to the girl and her brother, his roommate. She had been down for graduation, Larry explained, and he had made them both come home with him for a few days. Then the three of us piled into the back of the Mason barouche and went whirling away to Larry's house, behind the greys.

No one ever rode in greater splendor than I that day.

"We think a lot of Larry over at Penn," his roommate said to me.

"We think a lot of him here at home, too," I said proudly, and Larry put his hand over mine.

At four o'clock nearly all the young people in town were assembled out in front of the Masons in their runabouts and barouches, ready to drive to the hotel up at the mountain lake for our picnic and dance. When we climbed into the Mason barouche, Ted Williams began singing—

"We won't have a stylish marriage
For I can't afford a carriage."

Larry grinned, waved his hat in the air, and cracked his whip over the heads of the greys. We went tearing up the road with the rest of the crowd following, singing the chorus.

When we arrived at the lake, the boys let all the girls out at the picnic grounds; we began to sort the food and lay it out on the spick and span table cloths.

The boys, after putting away their horses, all came rushing down to dance and howl over the dainty sandwiches and homemade cakes and pies. Someone said, "We've got to have some drinking water."

Helen Adams smiled and said, "Let Larry and Blanche get it. So we took a large bucket, swinging it between us, and went over to the spring behind the Williams cottage. After Larry had taken the wooden cover off the spring, he suddenly swung about and pulled me down on the bench in the spring-house and put his arms about me—strong arms, like iron. I closed my eyes, his lips touched mine, and in a minute he breathed, "Blanche, my Blanche! How I've missed you."

BEFORE the last fiery rim of the setting sun had disappeared behind the mountains, we gathered all the picnic things together and took them up to the hotel. Dad Howser and Ernie Betts were up on the little platform at the end of the long dining-room that had been converted into a ball-room, tuning up.

At just eight-thirty Dad Howser picked up his battered old violin with a flourish and struck into the tune of "Grant's Grand March." Helen Adams pushed Larry and me up in front of everyone else, and we began the grand march. No queen in royal robes ever walked as lightly or carried herself with more splendor than I that night. I was the queen! Twice around and Helen called "First couple to the right—ba-a-al-ance all!" and we swung into an old-fashioned quadrille.

I danced as I had never danced before, for each time that the tips of Larry's fingers touched mine they seemed to fairly lift me up and leave me floating along in space. I wanted to sing and warble, like a bird in the early morning of a beautiful day, and would probably have tried, only I never had even been able to carry a tune. But I knew then what constituted the heavenly happiness my mother and sisters were always talking about, and I formed the philosophy that night that heaven is where you are if you make it so.

During the evening I was besieged on every side for dances. Boys, who before had let me think that they were doing me an honor to dance with me, reversed their attitude and treated me like something that breaks easily.

When I saw Lucille Marsh's eyes following Larry every time he moved, I resented it. He was mine! But when I stopped to think, didn't everyone follow him with their eyes and even go pattering after him, seeking a word of approval or a smile or a nod? Just because she was his roommate's sister, and was a part of the outside world that had claimed Larry for four years, didn't really mean anything. Because he loved me. Couldn't I tell by the way he held me close to him and by the look in his eyes when I passed him on the dance floor, even though he hadn't told me? He was mine for all of the long wonderful years to come. How I thrilled at the very thought!

When I was dancing with Ted Williams a little later, I smelled liquor on his breath; I chided him about it in a good-natured way. "You ought to see Byron Chase," Ted said; "he's got an awful



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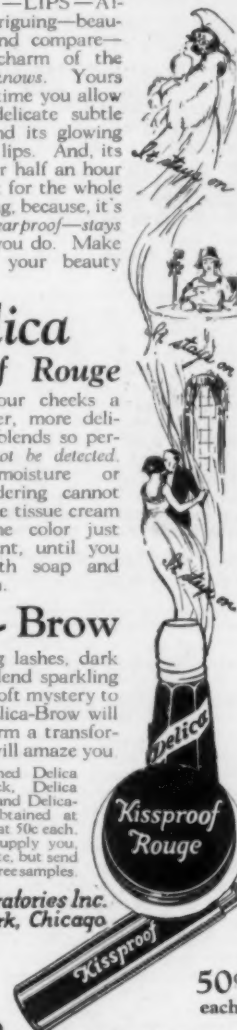
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load!" I wasn't sure that I should see him. A moment later Byron danced by me, and I could tell by the way his eyes sparkled that he had taken more than was good for him. I liked Byron, and it made me hurt to see him drink so much. In fact, next to Larry I liked him better than any boy in Granville, although he wasn't a Granville boy.

But he had been in Granville a year, so everyone accepted him as much as Granville ever accepted anything new. When he first arrived he asked for the best room at the Mason House and tried to buy some cigarettes—something no one had ever heard of at Bill Leonard's pool-room—and always went around with his clothes neatly pressed. How was he to know that in Granville everyone spoke to everyone else, and everyone's business was public property? There was no uncommon sight in Granville to see even Giles Mason walking up the street with old "Poke" Haskins, the town's colored, handy man, talking away as though they were bosom friends.

THEN one night two of the drinking Spitts brothers from up on the mountain came down to town and started a fight in the Mason House with some commercial men. When the Spitts boys pulled out long knives, Byron walked in and piled them both out into the middle of the street on top of one another. Then Granville began to thaw out.

After we found out that he was to head the civil engineers, who were surveying for the new railroad up through the valley, and he became an everyday sight in his flannel shirt, we regarded him in a different light.

We invited him to some of our dances, and he would have been the most popular boy in town while Larry was away if it hadn't been for his drinking. One night, after he had been in town for about six months, we went out for a ride. I asked him why he drank so much—or what seemed so much to Granville. He told me that it was to kill thoughts of his loneliness. Then he went on to tell me about his father and mother and sister all being killed at one time in a railroad accident. I could understand it better then.

Naturally, my family threw up their hands in shocked horror whenever I went any place with him. He was from a place we knew nothing about, and he drank! What if it was only once in awhile? "Stealing six loaves of bread at six different times is worse than stealing six all at one time," they said.

When Byron asked me to dance with him, I said I would if he wouldn't drink any more that evening.

"Does it really make any difference to you, Blanche?"

"Of course it does, Byron," I answered seriously. "If you aren't careful you'll get like old Dad Hower over there. Look at him now—quick! He's taking a sly drink out of his bottle, while Ernie goes on playing!"

When the music stopped, Byron asked me for the next waltz. I told him yes just as I saw Larry coming toward me across the dance floor.

"He's pretty drunk to dance with, isn't he?" Larry asked, as we watched him go through the door.

"Oh, he's all right," I laughed. Larry turned to me to say something, and I smelled the fumes of liquor on him, too. "Why, Larry! You've been drinking, too! I wish you wouldn't, dear," I said, a little worried. Larry's bays were a handful for anyone, even when they hadn't had a drop to drink.

"Just a little, Blanche. Don't worry about me." The music began again, and I drifted away into dreams in Larry's arms.

When Byron came to claim the next waltz, he walked so unsteadily that I suggested that we go out on the hotel veranda instead. As we passed through the door, I saw Larry watching. I waved my hand at him and wondered if he would mind. Then I threw the thought out of my mind.

"You know I've loved you almost from the first time I saw you. I haven't dared tell you so, and now Mason comes along and pays a little attention to you, and you follow him about like all the rest of the town." I tried to stop him but he kept on, his voice rising. "What will he ever do for you but make you realize that you've married the most money in Cortland County? You'll be tied up here for the rest of your life, never knowing there is anything but church sociables, square dances, gossip, and colicky children. My God! can't you see—"

HIS voice trailed off and suddenly died. I looked behind me and saw Larry standing there. As I turned, he walked slowly toward us, his eyes never leaving Byron's face. I pulled my hand away and tried to speak, but my effort ended in a silly half laugh, half sob.

Larry took the hand Byron had been holding and put it through his arm and started walking me back into the hotel, without saying a word.

We had taken only two or three steps when Byron laughed, a high pitched, derisive laugh that rang through the night air like a challenge. I could feel the muscles tighten in Larry's arm. For a second he seemed to hesitate; then he swung about, took two steps, his fist flew upward—once, twice. Each time there was a little "spat," and then Byron went hurtling off the veranda into the dewy grass.

I grasped Larry's arm and half dragged him back into the hotel as Byron got to his feet and lurched down the path toward the lake in a dazed way, as though he didn't know he had been struck. Looking quickly about, I saw a little group of people clustered in the shadows of the veranda, their chairs tilted forward, whispering and watching.

Later that night I told Larry all about Byron, so the next morning he went down to the Mason House and apologized to him. And Byron, knowing that he was drunk, said he was sorry, too, and they shook hands and forgot it.

But I didn't. People wouldn't let me. Someone always has to suffer for a thing like that, and Larry Mason couldn't have suffered for anything in Granville. So people put it on me, and I lost all the ground I had gained since Larry came back.

Mother and my sisters told me a thousand times about the things people were saying. They didn't need to. I could see the town shaking its head wisely; I could hear it saying, "Larry had better keep his eye on that girl. . . Ketchin' her encouragin' young Chase to make love to her. Chase got just what he deserved for the way he drinks and carries on. Who really knows anything about him, anyway? He says his father and mother are dead, but the truth is that he probably never had any. And her lettin' him make love to her, and Larry just home a day. Where there's smoke there's fire, 'though I can't for the world of me see where she gets it. Look at her sisters; you wouldn't catch them actin' the way she does. If Larry don't watch out—"

Prize-Winners for the April Letters of Criticism

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Do any of the "folks" who make up the background for the story on this page, "My Little World," remind you of people you have known? How about Helen Adams? Dad Hower?

How did you like "Embers of Hate" in this issue?

The above prizes will be awarded for letters of criticism in this issue.

We read every letter of criticism, and then pick out the prize-winners—not from the standpoint of praise, but from the real interest the writer shows. Some criticisms are given without anesthetic, and go to the "quick," but after it is over we get along much better.

Write your letter. The editors are the judges.

as being ridiculous. Didn't he understand?

The moon was peeping up through the branches of the trees on the far side of the lake, throwing a silvery radiance over the mountains and reflecting its own beauty in the dark still waters. I stood there enthralled, not speaking. I was thinking that I must get Larry and bring him out that we might see its beauty together, when I felt Byron's hand close over mine.

I quickly drew away and put up my hand to steady him as he swayed toward me.

"Blanche, dear," he begged.

"Byron!" I said sharply. "Don't be silly!"

I'M not silly; I'm serious. It nearly breaks my heart to see you waste yourself on a small-town god."

"You don't know what you're saying," I said sharply, and drew away from him, but he grasped my hand and held it tightly.

Hear them! Like the chatter of a thousand magpies winging from place to place, and spreading their story over hill-side and valley.

But it didn't make any real difference to me, because Larry loved me. And so long as he loved me, I didn't care what anyone said. Besides, they wouldn't dare go too far with Larry on my side.

For the next few days Larry, Lucille and Bob Marsh, and I were constantly together. That week will stand out in my memory with the day Father bought me a Shetland pony, and the time I fell in the creek on the way to Sunday School.

Then one afternoon Larry and I drove down back of the Mason farm and stopped on top of the hill that overlooks the valley. For a long time we sat there gazing off into space, content just to be near one another, speaking hardly a word. After a while Larry said:

"Lucille and Bob are going tomorrow."

"I thought they weren't going until next week," I said, surprised.

"Bob's got to get back to New York to get started in his father's bank."

"That's too bad. I'll miss them."

For a moment Larry didn't answer. Then he said:

"Blanche." Something in his voice drew my eyes to his face and without his telling me, I suddenly knew that Larry was going with them! As casually as I could I said:

"What, dear?"

"Dad thinks I'd better go back with Bob and take the job his father offered me in his bank—just for a while, of course. Dad says it will help broaden me; give me a lot of knowledge that will be invaluable when I am in his bank."

Tears crept into my eyes in spite of my effort to keep them back, and in another moment Larry was holding my face close to his shoulder and saying:

"It won't be long, dear—only a few months. And nothing can ever make any difference between you and me, if I'm a million miles away. Six months will pass in no time and then I'll be back; then life will really begin for us."

* * * * *

After Larry was gone it was the same old story. Mother and my sisters began to nag me continually. Why hadn't Larry come to tell Mother, if we were going to be married when he came back? That was the proper thing for him to do, they said. . . . It certainly looked funny the way he had come home just for a few days and then run right away again to take a job in someone else's bank when his father had a bank of his own right here at home. . . . Maybe his father thought he ought to get away from Granville for a few months because of me. . . . And the way people were talking again!

Sometimes I wanted to scream and shout at the injustice of it. And when Larry's sweet letters began to arrive I wanted to go down in the town square and read them aloud to everyone.

MOTHER began twitting me for going places with Byron Chase, if I was going to marry Larry. So I wrote to Larry and asked him if he wouldn't please say something in one of his letters that would show Mother he didn't mind if I went driving and to dances with Byron. In his next letter he said:

"Tell Byron that if he doesn't see that you have a good time while I am gone that I'll come back and ruin his darn railroad for him."

When I read it to Byron he had the queerest expression on his face and said:

"He certainly has a great deal of confidence in his power to hold you, hasn't he?"

"I love him, Byron," I answered, simply.

Finally Mother and my sisters became



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SCALP TREATMENT

even more insistent. Did Larry Mason ask me to marry him? No, but it was understood between us, I tried to tell them. They laughed and scoffed in the same way they had while Larry was away at school.

"How do you know what he was really thinking, if he didn't tell you?" they asked.

When I couldn't stand it any longer I wrote Larry a long letter and tried to explain it all to him. I asked him to please write to his mother and my mother and a few of the other busybodies in town and tell them in a casual way that we were going to be married when he came home. I told him how people were talking, and what they were insinuating, and how unpleasant it all was for me, and how very happy it would make me if he would just end their gossiping.

Within the next few days Byron Chase asked me to marry him. We were out for a drive in the evening, when he turned to me and opened his heart and let me see into the very depth of it. I didn't know at first what to say. Then I tried to tell him, without hurting him, that I loved Larry and that I could never marry anyone else, even if Larry didn't ever want me.

"That's just it," he said; "all this talk that's going around town, and Mason lets you stay here and face it. You know what people are saying, don't you?"

"Only too well!"

"Well, then, why don't you make Larry do something about it? I've crammed it back down some of their throats, but if I say too much it will hurt you more than it will help."

After two weeks passed and I had no word from Larry, I began to doubt a little, myself. Perhaps they were right; perhaps he didn't intend to marry me. Perhaps that was why he had gone away. I began to lie awake nights, tossing, turning, thinking until it seemed that I would lose my reason. Then Mother said:

"Well, you've got to do something to stop this talk. It's hurting all of us. Your sisters are ashamed to go on the street." I told her then that I had written Larry; she shook her head and said:

"You see?"

Something snapped within me, and I almost screamed, "All right, all right! But if—" and I ran to my room, sobbing as though my heart would break. And it had, almost.

When Byron came to take me riding that evening, we drove up to the reservoir behind town. And I asked him to marry me right away, now, that night.

FOR a moment he looked at me as though he couldn't believe his own ears. Then his face lit up with the most wonderful, tender smile I had ever seen; the reins slipped from his hands; he gathered me into his arms. But when his lips touched mine, I could feel Larry's . . . Larry's lips . . . I shuddered . . . gone forever!

In a half hour we were back in town, and Byron had instructed his assistant in handling his work for the next few days. Then I waited, while he rushed to his room and packed a bag. While he sat on our porch and talked to Mother, I slipped upstairs and turned Larry's picture face down and put a few things in an old bag. Then I stole out to Byron's runabout and put it in the back—but not before I had turned Larry's picture up and pressed my lips against his.

We caught the nine-ten, southbound. Before we left, Byron telephoned to one of his assistants a half hour's ride down the valley and told him we were coming there to get married.

There were so many conflicting emotions and thoughts racing through me that I didn't try to fathom any of them. I just tried to be sweet to Byron and hold up my end of the bargain. But it seemed

that I was following a funeral procession, and up in the front was my heart and my hopes. Just my body was riding in a carriage behind, mourning for myself.

I would rather have died than go back to face Granville. But I was determined to face them and laugh in their faces. Then when Byron's work was finished there, we would go away and never go back so long as we lived.

How tender and sweet and considerate he was of me. I almost hated myself at times for not loving him as he loved me. The tales he told me of the things we would see from one end of the earth to the other sometimes almost made me glad.

WE slipped back into Granville on a night train, unannounced. Byron asked me if I wanted to go to Mother's first; I told him that I didn't. We went to the Mason House and got a room. Some of the men who always hung about the lobby came over and made quite a fuss over us, and Byron promised to go back down to the bar and have a drink with them after we were settled in our room.

"Only one, Byron," I said as he left me. But when he came back his face was flushed and his words were thick. A vision of what was to be loomed up before me, and with a little sob I said I was going to run over to Mother's for a few minutes.

Mother cried over me, and my sisters sniffed. After a bit Mother motioned me into the dining-room. Then, taking me in her arms and kissing me, she handed me a letter and slipped out of the room. The other girls followed. I went into the kitchen and, under the light of the old oil lamp, turned the letter over and over in my hands as though it were something too warm to hold for long.

Slowly I tore it open. And then I read until there was nothing before my eyes but a blur; I wiped away the tears and went on, every word stabbing through me like a knife. When I had finished I sank down on a chair, the letter fluttering from my hands to the floor. I sat there motionless, my arms dangling, my heart crushed as though some mighty hand had fastened itself upon it. A roaring came in my head. I brushed it away and picked up the letter and read again:

Blanche, darling: Oh, dearest, dearest—I'm so sorry. I never stopped to think how narrow, how little, and how terrible the gossip of a small town can be.

Bob's father sent us up into northern Canada without a minute's notice to look over some property they are thinking of buying, so I didn't get your letter until today. I wanted to drop you a line while I was gone, but we were out in wild country most of the time.

I have just written your mother and my mother a note, telling them to plan on our wedding in the spring, after I get settled in Dad's bank.

Lord, I don't know how I can ever wait until then, dear. I see your eyes and feel your lips and hear your voice until it seems that I must rush back to you. Then I realize that I'm getting a lot of valuable training here; that I've got to stick it out no matter how much it hurts.

But for every minute of torture now, we will have hours and days of happiness.

Bob's calling me; we're going down to see some rummy show at the Casino. When you and I are married we'll come up here every winter and stay for a month, and I'll show you what borders the little kingdom of Granville!

All my love, my blessed Blanche.

Larry

P. S. I wrote Ted Williams and told him that if he didn't take care of my future wife for me I'd throw him in the lake when I got home!

[To be continued]

Just Running Chinks

[Continued from page 63]

man opened it—I'll never forget the way his ears stuck out, like the sails on a boat—
—And curly said,
“Well?”

“Are you sure you couldn't use one more girl?” I pleaded.

He seemed to shift from one foot to another while his mind formed an answer, and then, with all the accumulated sarcasm of an under clerk, answered:

“Sure as hell, dearie!” Then he slammed the little door in my face.

If I had been a man I would have gone through the partition, glass and all, and salved all my aches by dragging him up and down the floor and jumping on him.

Instead, I dragged my weary feet to the elevator and was taken down to the first floor. It was the last place on my list; I had pains in places that I never knew could pain before, and my head buzzed and throbbed at every step.

I stopped before a jewelry counter and pretended to look into the showcase. A salesgirl asked me if there was anything I wanted. I shook my head and moved slowly on. A tray of watches lay before me. I hesitated again to look at them. Suddenly there flashed through my mind a picture of Grandfather Loring, his eyes twinkling and questioning and *encouraging*. I tried to throw out the thoughts that formed in my mind, but they persisted.

I looked quickly to my left. The girl had moved on down the counter. I felt my hand close over one of the little gold watches. Hardly knowing, I slipped it into my pocket and began a slow walk toward the front of the store.

Then I realized what I had done. It came like a clap of thunder. I hesitated. Panic seized me and I quickened my steps. My knees seemed about to give way beneath me and I could feel cold perspiration forming on my forehead. Someone bumped against me, and as I swayed unsteadily and stumbled, a young man grasped my arm and steadied me. For a moment he looked into my face smiling. Then, as I moved quickly toward the door, he turned and went on down the aisle.

I wanted to run, but I checked myself with an effort, knowing it would give me away entirely. I passed through the inner doors with a sigh of relief that was almost a moan. Then, as I was about to step out on the sidewalk, I felt a hand touch my shoulder and a polite soft voice said:

“Just a minute please, madam.”

NO one needed to tell me who stood by my side. I could feel who he was. Somehow, I was almost glad; I wanted to scream with relief. Now I didn't worry about a job, or where I was going to sleep, or anything else. I looked up into his face. His eyes, hard and callous, seemed to soften.

“You'd better come along without a fuss,” he said, almost kindly.

Trembling, barely able to stand, I turned without a word and walked back by his side. He looked down at me curiously as I whispered softly. But he didn't hesitate. He just kept grimly on toward the elevators, which seemed a million miles away.

He pointed to an empty elevator and told the operator to take us upward alone. Inside, I leaned back against the side to keep from slipping to the floor, not caring about the curious gaze of the elevator man. We got out on the same floor on which I had applied for the position, and he led the way through a door marked: *Mr. Walker, Investigator*.

My nerves got the better of me; I fell into a chair and cried, with my face in my

hands, until a rough hand on my shoulder jerked me upright. That angered me, and I glared piteously up into his eyes. There were two other men there beside him, and they all began to question me at once and in turn. But I just cried the harder, unable to answer any of their questions.

Finally, they called in a woman and told her to search me. She ran her hands over my body, into my blouse, into the pockets of my little jacket. When she found nothing I was as much astonished as she. Instinctively, I put my hand in the pocket where I had put the watch. It was empty! A million thoughts crowded my brain. I didn't try to understand it, but certainly if they couldn't find anything they couldn't hold me. I had enough sense to realize that, before she called them back into the room and told them she could find nothing.

I ASSUMED an attitude of outraged, indignant innocence. They disappeared into an inner room and in a few moments came out and began profuse apologies. But behind their apologies was a puzzled reluctant air that made me know that they thought and knew that I was guilty, but there was nothing else for them to do.

So I accepted their excuses with the best grace possible and asked them if I might go, afraid that I would faint and that they would find some explanation for the disappearance of the watch before I could get away. One of them accompanied me to the street and politely suggested that I do my shopping elsewhere in the future.

In a half daze I made my way up Fifth Avenue, across a side street, and up Sixth Avenue. Perhaps I hadn't taken the watch after all, I thought. Perhaps I had made the motion and checked myself, and they had thought the same as I, judging by my movements. Perhaps none of it was true—I couldn't be sure of anything the way things had happened since the night before!

As I passed the doorway of an office building I heard a sharp little “P-s—s-st!” Looking in the direction from which the sound came I saw a young man lounging against the entranceway. As I kept on up the street, he followed me. When we came opposite the revolving doors of a restaurant, he fell in step beside me. With a quick furtive look up and down the street he suddenly seized my arm and turned me about, half dragging me through the restaurant doors.

As I looked into his face and he grinned at me, I recognized him as the young man who had bumped me as I was making my way out of the department store with the watch in my pocket. And, without a protest, I followed him to a table in the corner. When we were seated he leaned over the table and said,

“Say, listen, kid. If you're going to play the shops you'll have to get the game down better than that. Why, when you picked up this watch—” and with a glance about him, he slipped his hand into an inner pocket and pulled out the watch I had taken from the counter! I was so astonished that I could only gaze at him, mutely.

“Why, the whole store was giving you the once-over, kid. If I hadn't had my eye on that bull, he'd have got you cold. His eyes nearly flopped out on the floor when you nabbed the watch. Then he came down on you so fast I was afraid for a minute I wasn't gonna be able to get to you first.

“Now, listen. You're good lookin' and you don't look like a moll. If you wanna sign up with me I'll put you wise. It's the easiest dough in the world—”

That was as far as he got when every-



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thing began to swim before my eyes. I put out my hand to steady myself as his voice died away and things went black.

Jimmie told me later that he carried me out of the restaurant and into the cab where I found myself a little bit later. I tried to put things together; I asked him where he was taking me, but he just put his arm about me and made me put my head on his shoulder.

"I'm gonna take care of you and get you started right, kid," he said in a moment. I was too weak and tired to protest. Nothing mattered but rest. I began to cry softly, and he patted my hands and said nice things to me. So I just settled down closer to him and closed my eyes, willing to do anything in the world for a little rest.

After a while we stopped in front of a brown, stone house and he helped me out and half carried me up the steps, into a large hideously furnished room that had a fire place with tiled sides like the one at home.

HE laid me on the large brass bed and pulled off my shoes and brought me a glass of water. Then he sat down beside me, stroked my face, and held my hand. I drifted off into a nervous sleep.

When I awoke he came over and stood beside me, smiling down into my eyes. Then he got me another glass of water and took some white shiny powder out of a little bottle and put just a little on the end of a nail file. He told me to hold it to my nose and inhale it.

After a few moments my mouth tasted bitter and my tongue became numb, but the roaring went out of my head and I felt as though I could get up and move about. But when I tried he pushed me back and said,

"Take it easy, kid. I'm gonna go out and get you some food and fix you up right."

For two days he took care of me; he went to my hotel and got my bag and brought it to his rooms; he gave me everything that I could have wished for. And every once in awhile he would make me snuff some of the white powder, making me feel like a bird with wings. Then he would sit beside me while I told him about my home and about my father and my mother and my sister, and why I had run away, and even about Grandfather Loring.

"Kid, your grandpap had the right slant," he said. "Now, listen! The guys that get anything in this world are the guys that go after it. I didn't figure you at all when I first saw you. I thought you was a wise moll, and was one of the gang at first."

"But just because you've been a dumbbell ain't nothin' against you. You'll learn, and I'll teach you. We can strip this old town clean together. You've got the right stuff in you to go over big when you know the ropes. It's easy dough, kid, and it's just askin' to be plucked!"

In the next few weeks he taught me all the tricks of his trade. I soon got so that I could take things from his pocket without his even knowing. How it pleased me when he would cry out with delight at my progress!

We spent days in the subways together, while he taught me how to work, how to judge my victim, how to approach him, how to nip him, and then how to make my getaway.

Then he taught me how to work the stores, part of the time with a little girl, who was the daughter of a friend of Jimmie's. The little girl, Martha, would go in with me. Then she would go down the counter about half way and do cute

childish pranks to divert the attention of the salesgirls and detectives, while I would steal what I wanted, reasonably sure that I was not seen. Then we would make our way out of the store with Jimmie following close behind, keeping a keen lookout.

Jimmie instructed me minutely in the course I was to take in case I was caught. He schooled me in the business systems followed in the big shops so that I could pick out the easier spots as I worked. But he laid the greatest emphasis of all on the matter of keeping him concealed in case I was caught, saying that my whole chance for getting away would be in his being free to work for me. He even told me that if the worst came to the worst, it would be better for me to take a jail sentence without whimpering or squealing, because then he would better be able to work for my freedom. And I believed him, blindly trusting, ready to sacrifice anything and everything for Jimmie.

I met other pickpockets and shoplifters, and even burglars and holdup men, while I was with Jimmie. Some of the men had three or four molls working for them all

Something Worth While!

Have you read the announcement on page 37? It will interest you.

On the first day of August, a SMART SET girl will go downtown and find herself on the cover of the September issue of her magazine. She will then see herself looking into the faces of a million people. Then she will thank her stars that she responded a few months ago to the SMART SET offer. She sent in her photograph.

This \$1000 cash prize is going to some SMART SET girl. Read the offer.

at one time, but not any one of them knew of the other's existence. I asked Jimmie if he would do that to me, and he said:

"Not on your life kid. I come clean." And I went on blindly until I began to love and worship him.

MOST of the girls who stole for men used dope, and all of them had been taught by the men the art of thieving. Some of the people worked in "mobs" that embraced the molls, their lookouts and spotters. The mob included the grifters, the chiefs, and the "fences," or disposers of the things they stole. Every "mob" had one or two children who worked with them, who were taught their part in regular schools of shoplifting and burglary.

When I began to find out that most of the molls wound up in prisons or hospitals, or committed suicide, I began to beg Jimmie to go straight. He laughed at me and began to give me more of the white powder, saying that I was losing my nerve. But when he came across a "con man" scheme, which we could work together, we gave up shoplifting and pickpocketing, trying our hand at it.

After a few attempts without much gain we gave it up and went back to our old game. Then one day Jimmie came home and said:

"Say, kid, I think I got a real steer today."

"What, Jimmie?"

"Well, remember the time I sold that truck load of bootleg for Jake?"

"Yes."

"Well, he's in town again, and says he has a game that can give us a fortune in a year if we play it right and don't take too many chances."

"What is it, Jimmie?" I asked.

"Runnin' in Chinks from Cuba." I didn't understand and must have shown it in my expression for he went on to explain: "You know the United States passed a law about forty years ago prohibiting any Chinks from immigrating to this country. Some tourists and students and merchants are allowed to come in for a limited time. But the Chink laundrymen and merchants that are here need new help all the time and are willing to pay big money to get it. There is a regular tong that does nothing but bring over Chinks from China and smuggle 'em into New York, or wherever they want to go."

"You see they pull it this way: If a Chink wants a relative or a friend brought over, he goes to this bird in New York and pays him two hundred bucks on account and promises to pay him a thousand more when they deliver his friend here in New York. In case the Chink don't have the twelve hundred, the smuggling tong will bring his friend over and then hold an option on his services for five years after he gets here so's to get their dough back."

JAKE says he knows the big mogul in the tong here in New York and that he will give us five hundred smackers for every Chinaman we bring in from Cuba. They take them from China to Cuba and park 'em there until they can smuggle 'em through. He says some birds bring in as many as fifty to a load. Thinka that! Twenty-five thousand bucks for a coupla hours work. Of course, if you get caught you get fined five thousand bucks for every Chink on board and a year in the old pen for every one.

"Jake says, 'Are you game?' and I says, 'I'm set,' so I guess it's all to the good," Jimmie finished.

"I go, too, don't I Jimmie?" I asked sharply.

"You bet your shirt you do, kid—or I don't!" he answered, and I ran into his arms. Anything to be away from New York so that I could breathe without being afraid someone would touch me on the arm—that horrible touch! I waited for it night and day, dreamed of it, knew that it was only a matter of time until that touch would be a reality.

After getting our instructions from the tong we cleared New York Harbor at dusk one night in Jake's speed boat and stole silently down the coast toward Cuba. As the lights twinkled in the buildings of downtown New York I thought of that night I had stolen down the stairs of my mother's house, looking for freedom and romance and mystery. And I thought of Grandfather Loring's picture hanging in Mother's hallway and of the twinkle in his eyes.

On the way down I couldn't help asking Jimmie whether many smugglers were caught.

"Now," he answered. "The Chinks know that if a revenue boat gets on the trail that they've got to save their skins the best way they can. The crews throw

'em overboard or land 'em on an island or anything to get rid of 'em. Once they buried 'em alive in the hold."

A feeling of terrible nausea stole over me, and I went down into the cabin shuddering. A human life was a human life, I told myself, even if it was a Chink.

The day after we landed in Havana we went down to a place called the Parque Central, a sort of garden restaurant at the end of the Prado in the center of town. All about the place is a high fence, and inside is the rendezvous of the smugglers. An orchestra plays soft, soothing music, and in the center is a fountain that is surrounded by palms and beautiful flower beds.

THERE were sharp little men of every nationality moving about from table to table closing deals, persuading, promising, discussing sailings and prices. There were photographers making arrangements to take photographs of aliens, the photographs to be attached to forged passports, ready in case of trouble. The faces of the men frightened me, for in them I imagined I could see an unscrupulous daring that would take a human life without a second thought.

Jimmie told me that there were over twenty-five thousand Chinamen waiting in Cuba to be smuggled in—half as many as were ever admitted to the United States. He took me out to one of the camps where thousands of them were barracked outside Havana. In each rude little shack there were three or four Chinamen, each with an American suit to wear the day they left. Their shacks smelled of fish, about the only food they had, and of opium for nearly all of them were opium smokers. Some of them had been there in abject misery for six months, waiting to be smuggled across.

Every few nights for a month we slipped out of Cuba in our fast express cruiser and raced through the Caribbean across the Gulf Stream to the Florida keys with half a dozen Chinamen on board.

Jake knew the coral reefs and inlets along the coast so well that he could dodge in and out, even in the blackness of the night. More than once we took shelter behind one of the thousand little islands that line the coast of Florida. And when a revenue cutter would get on our trail we would skim between the bare sandbars and treacherous channels, leaving them floundering clumsily behind unable to follow in such shallow water.

One night when we were cruising along near the coast, waiting for a signal from shore, a speed boat came racing up beside us. Before we could get under way they had swung about and thrown a line over our bow. It all happened so fast that I can scarcely remember, but in another few moments they were alongside. I saw Jimmie whip the blue-nosed pistol he always carried from his coat pocket. As two men started to climb aboard us, Jimmie poured a half dozen shots right into their faces. Then Jake's gun spat behind me and a third man toppled back. They pushed the boat off, and we sped away up the coast with the Chinks jabbering and shrieking below.

A little later Jimmie told me they were hi-jackers, and if they had got aboard they would have captured or killed us, and then would have pretended to the Chinks that they were revenue men and would have taken all their money after a fake arrest.

"But you killed those two men, Jimmie," I said, scarcely able to control my voice.

"Hi-jackers don't ever live to be very old," he laughed. We had nearly fifty thousand on his shoulders.

The days that followed were days of suffering and agony. I begged Jimmie to quit, to go straight and marry me, but he only laughed. We had nearly fifty thousand dollars in a bank in Cuba from two months work. It was enough to last us all our lives, I told him.

The dope Jimmie fed me was making a wreck of me. But I couldn't stop it, and he knew it. When I tried I nearly went crazy from the thoughts that racked my brain. I wanted to run away, but I knew I hadn't the courage. He had been my whole life from the time I left home. He had me tied to him so tightly that only death could part us, I thought.

Then one night when we were taking a half dozen Chinamen up the coast to land them at Jacksonville, we ran into a storm. Our little boat floundered and pitched bravely along until our engines went bad. Finally, at Jimmie's insistence, Jake sent up some rockets and through the storm there came the wail of a siren. A boat maneuvered close enough to throw us a line. Then they began to tow us to shore.

At the break of day, as we neared the shore, Jake came running down to Jimmie and said, "Jimmie! That's a government cutter towing us!"

Then began a scene that left its imprint so deeply imbedded in my mind that I see it by day, dream it by night, and hear the shrieks of those Chinks as Jimmie and Jake brought them on deck, one at a time, and threw them into the sea. I can see the swirling water closing over their fear-stricken faces and see their hands clutching as they disappeared from view.

After that trip I told Jimmie I was going to leave him; that I would go mad if I stayed any longer. He laughed and shrugged his shoulders. But when I asked him for half the money he had banked he looked into my eyes for a full minute, his eyes narrowed to slits. Then he turned away without answering me.

The next trip out Jimmie was sick. We had only two Chinks, so I said I would go with Jake. And when we tried to land them we were run down by two revenue cutters. Jake wanted to throw the Chinamen overboard, but I stood in front of them and fought with him for their lives.

They got us. I waited for Jimmie to come to my aid, but he never came. Jake paid my fine, but we each got two years in jail. I waited for some word from Jimmie through those terrible two years, but it never came. I sent out messages to him through underworld channels, but no word ever came back.

WHEN I got out I tried to find Jimmie. But all I could find were stories about him. He had three other molls working for him all the time I was working for him. He had appeared in New York with a "roll" shortly after I went to jail. Someone said he had gone to Europe.

That was enough. This past year has been hell—far worse than anything before it—for I have been trying to go straight. I got a job, and I'm slowly bringing myself back to normal.

I've been doing a lot of thinking since those days of intoxicated daring, and one thing has become almost an obsession with me: I think I must have missed the sadness of the life-sized portrait, and I want to go back to Mother's sometime to see if Grandfather Loring's eyes really twinkled.

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My Overtime Pay

[Continued from page 49]

lunch, and full of hurrying, bustling people, but we seemed all alone in the room, and it came to me that Tom liked me very, very much, and that back of his teasing lips were hot, throbbing words that he did not dare to say yet. I was frightened and thrilled, but I liked it. It was so good to feel that there was someone who cared; someone who was strong enough to protect me from everything; someone to whom I was more than a quiet little mouse.

"Mayn't I take you home in my runabout to-night?" he asked when we reached the office. "It's only a Ford, of course, but a tried and trusty animal, guaranteed not to bite, kick, or run away!"

I laughed, and then felt disappointed. "Oh, I'm sorry," I told him, "but I must do some letters, and there are some details to be gone over. I shan't be through until long after you've gone!"

"Let me wait for you!" he said, but I shook my head, and then gave him a quick look under my lashes. I could see that he really did want me to let him wait. But I didn't dare to.

But that evening the Boss did most of his dictation walking up and down past my chair. This puzzled me a little, for the work was not difficult so much as monotonous, and the business was getting quite good.

Suddenly he stopped beside my chair, and I looked up at him in surprise. He was breathing hard, and his sensitive face was working. Then he stooped, and before I knew what he was doing, he lifted me into his arms, holding me until my breath was gone, kissing me like a mad-man.

"My God!" he said, "you are beautiful, beautiful! You witch, oh, you witch!" and he began to kiss me again. I tried to fight him, but I am a very small girl, slight and not strong. So I could only let him kiss me, though the tears were rolling down my cheeks.

"Oh, don't!" I cried. "Please! Don't!" He let me go, and his fine face was strained. His eyes were full of longing, as they swept over me while I shrank away.

"Oh, why—?" I cried, wildly, "why—why—? Why are you so horrid?"

YOU think I am, Mary?" he asked, gently. The madness died out of his eyes, leaving them sad and wistful. "I am sorry! How can I make you understand how sorry I am? But I am all alone. On my word, while my wife lived, and until now, I have never been like this. I have men friends, of course, but this—is different. Can't you understand?" he pleaded. "Every man needs a woman. I need you, Mary!"

"No! No!" I cried, and ran out into the big, empty room and got my hat and fled. My heart was beating like a drum in my breast. My face felt on fire. But, odd though it seem, I was not angry—at least, not so much angry as—as—well, queer. "I need you, Mary!" rang in my head, over and over.

I went home and had a good cry. Girls know, no matter how "modern" they pretend to be, that there is nothing that can make a girl feel better than a good cry after furious emotional excitement. But I did not sleep that night, for the words, "I need you, Mary!" continued singing in my brain, singing, chanting, shouting, echoing until I was beating the pillow in a frenzy.

In the morning, on my way to work, I saw a small crowd, among which was a policeman with a small faded woman in charge. I heard someone ask: "What is the trouble?" and then heard the police-

man answered, curtly, scornfully, "Vagrancy!"

I ran from there, for that woman's eyes were of the same color as my own, and I could not help but think that if the Boss' longing for me grew greater . . .

But to my surprise, the Boss gave no sign when I saw him. He looked, I noticed, a little bit tired, and very sad. He did not look at me when he could help it, and I knew that he was ashamed. But there was a strained line at the corners of his lips that told me he was also fighting—fighting—well, I hardly know how to say it, but he was trying not to think of me.

It was a painful morning for me, and my shyness was so acute that I hardly dared raise my head. When noon came, Tom insisted and teased until I let him take me out to lunch again. And then, right in the middle of that noisy, rushing restaurant, he proposed to me!

"I love you, Mary! You are such a shy, quiet little thing that I had to look at you twice to see enough of you to know I was in love!" he said, whimsically. But tender and, with his nice eyes, very serious, he continued, "I want to marry you. I want you to—to—Gee! Mary, I want you to sort of take care of my home!"

BUT I couldn't! I got up and hurried out, and went back to the office. I couldn't even explain to him. He was so fine and brave and strong, and I was none of these things.

Tom came in and looked at me, and then at the other girl who was just in from lunch, and then he went to his desk. He wrote a note. A buyer came in, and the girl was showing him some samples. Tom walked over and put a note on my desk. Then he walked back, but he was watching me. The note said:

Mary dear: I mean it! I may not know you very well, and I'm sure you do not know me very well, but I am dead sure that I want to marry you. Will you, Mary, darling? Tom.

No, I thought, he didn't know me very well! If he knew what a miserable little coward I was—

My face burned as I wondered what he would think if he knew what had happened last night. I looked up and saw him staring at me, and my face grew more rosy. I picked up the note and nodded, just to show him I understood, but he thought I meant I would marry him.

Before I could stop him, he jumped across the room and grabbed my hands.

"Oh, Mary, darling!" he cried; "I'll make you happy!"

"But I don't love you!" I said, although I was not sure.

"I'll make you!" he said, his voice dead in his sincerity; "I'll love you so much you'll just have to love me back!"

He pulled me into his arms and held me against his big chest. It was sweet to feel that he would always protect me. His arms made such a restful haven!

"Honey," he said, "don't cry!" but I couldn't stop, for I had just made up my mind that I would marry him, though I knew now, instantly and absolutely, as a girl knows when she is in a man's arms, that I didn't love him. But he was so safe!

Then I remembered that we were in the big office, and pulled myself from his arms. It was as I had been afraid; the buyer and the other girl were staring at us and grinning. But I didn't care about them. The thing that made me flush and hurriedly dry my eyes was something else.

The Boss was standing in the doorway

of his office. He looked very tired, very sad. My heart gave a queer, yearning jump when I saw him.

"Dad!" shouted Tom; "she's going to marry me!"

I put my hand up to stop him, but I couldn't speak.

The Boss stared at us both for a long minute, and then a queer, tired look made his smile—for of course he smiled; he was a thoroughbred!—made his smile very, deeply beautiful.

"I am glad, my boy," he said; "glad that you have such good judgment. It is too bad—but I need some letters taken at once."

"Have a heart, Dad!" protested Tom.

"Wait!" I cried, finally getting my voice. "Tom, I—I didn't know he was your father!"

"Shucks!" grinned Tom; "he ain't much, but won't he do for a father-in-law?"

"No!" I answered, very quietly, and Tom's face went as white as his father's had become.

"You—can't—mean that, Mary!" he said. "Ho!" he tried to laugh, "that is your joke!"

"I will not have him—for a father-in-law!" I said, desperately.

THEY all, the Boss and Tom and the buyer and the other girl, stared at me, amazed. Then I tried to be matter of fact. "I will take—the letters, now!" I said, fighting hard to control my voice.

I picked up my note-book and walked into the Boss' private office. Only when he had closed the door did I dare look up. I was afraid, and I was glad, and I was shaking so that I could hardly hide it from him.

His face was the white face of a man who had known the torture of fire. He

came over to me, very anxious to speak.

"Mary!" he protested, "don't make my son suffer because I have been a rotter! On my word of honor, I have never done so before. It was the sheer need; the ache in my throat for woman. I have been a weakling, but, again on my word of honor, I had intended to offer you honorable marriage—but Tom anticipated me!"

"I do not love Tom!" I said, low-voiced. "Nonsense!" he said, and then sighed. "Is it because of—what I have done—how I—I have behaved?"

I looked into the fine, sad face. In his eyes I could see the soul of a sensitive man who was suffering. My throat was aching as I said, "Yes!"

There was a little silence, until he asked, "But isn't there some way I can—make up?"

"You were going to offer to marry me!"

I said, and he stared at me, and sank into a chair. He stared and stared, until I could not stand it. I caught his head against my breast.

"Oh, you sad baby!" I cried. "Can't you see? I love you! But of course you can't see. Men are so stupid. And, besides, I have only found it out!"

That was several years ago. Sometimes, in the evening, Tom comes over to see us. Then I tease him quite mercilessly because he misunderstands my meaning when I refused to have his father for a "father-in-law." And my husband chuckles in his deep, mellow way, and looks at me over Tom's head. For, you see, in spite of its strangeness, our marriage has been a happy one. The Boss, as I still call him, in fun, now needs me more than ever. And he loves me, too. He is not so sturdy as Tom, but to be needed is sweeter to me than to be protected.

What Happened to Me at Midnight

[Continued from page 43]

breathing, no matter how loud, could be heard at that great distance. I almost froze in my tracks, when it finally dawned upon me that someone was just outside my door. Everything that Pinkey had told me at dinner came back to me at once. Mr. Thomas! Midnight! There I was, all alone, and I realized that I could never get any nurse to hear me. All my other patients were sleeping soundly. God! What should I do? I was too paralyzed to move. I tried to shout, but found my voice had left me completely. I realized Mr. Thomas was strong—all delirious persons are. Oh, why couldn't I scream or move? I got shaky. Then all power of even thinking clearly was taken from me.

SUDDENLY the door began to open slowly, steadily. A long, brown, bony hand came creeping up the frame of the door. Slowly up, up, up. He had fallen, and was pulling himself up again. Yes, yes, of course—that was what had awakened me! Then he rose slowly, and stood in the doorway, swaying back and forth, like a skeleton dangling from a wire. Oh, my God, what could I do? There he was, standing in the doorway, barring my only escape in the small chart room. I must have tried to scream, for he laughed a hollow, ghostly laugh. He put his bony hand over his head and laughed again. Oh, if I could only die! He was master of the situation, and, delirious as he was, he realized it.

"M—Mr. Thomas," I finally whispered,

"won't you please go back to bed?" I pleaded. "Please do; you'll only make yourself worse. Go back and I'll bring you anything you want."

He only laughed that hideous way, and then came slowly forward. It was then that I realized he had caught sight of the key in the narcotic box which was lying on my desk.

"Dope, dope," he whispered, showing his yellow teeth. "Dope, dope. I'll kill you. I will. I want dope."

I was beyond all reason when I grabbed the telephone, but remembered that it was disconnected with all the floors. I held on to it, as it was all I could do. I couldn't even put it down. He came forward clutching and unclutching his bony fingers. Oh, those hands! Why didn't someone happen along!

I raised the telephone over my head, intending to strike his raised hands, and came down with it. With a scream he grabbed his chest, swayed to and fro, and fell to the floor with a sickening thud. He was dead before anyone could be aroused.

Was I really to blame? Is the blood of that man on my hands, as the reporter said?

I was dismissed from that hospital, black-listed in every hospital recorded in the state, branded as a murderer . . . but I'm not, I'm not! I never even thought of killing him! I didn't even touch him!

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"Why! I didn't know you could design and make gowns."

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It's Good to Be Alone

[Continued from page 70]

salad. She caught my eye, and smirked. "The long handled one, Lucy!" she called across the table, "You'll learn, old thing."

For over a year I suffered her sarcasm, and always seemed to shrink when she came around. I could only listen, and go away. Clifford never saw it, for before him she was calm, quiet, politely reserved, or busy telling him of her social activities. I would not tell him how I suffered, for I loved him too dearly to hurt him. He idolized her, and I do not wonder, for she was—beneath her affectation—a beautiful girl. My life at that time was almost unbearable. I sometimes thought I might have been happier teaching school, and never having realized the luxury of love.

I wondered if I should go home for a while; however, I was more afraid of the things Carol would say or do during my absence, so I stayed. I had no women friends at all. Carol had seen to that.

But all this time she had not succeeded in poisoning Clifford's mind. Happily unaware of the waging war, he loved me gaily. Then I discovered that another bond was formed between us. I longed to tell him, but I knew that if I did, Carol would come to know. I could hear that high-pitched voice condemning me. How Carol would hate anything which would draw her father closer to me!

IT was just about this time that Carol brought Sylvia Chester home for a visit. Mrs. Chester was fresh from a Paris divorce, with a weakness for Parisian gowns, with filmy skirts which parted unexpectedly and exposed sheer chignon hose to the knee, and a very Parisian line of risque chatter. She was a flimsy, gauze-winged, little butterfly of the world, about my own age.

"You don't mind if I call you Lucy?" she said; "I think it is so naive, the way Carol does it, bridging over the difference in your ages so nicely." Sylvia Chester almost purred over me—and in a way that made me very suspicious.

One night we had planned a theatre party. Carol had gone for tickets, and at dinner she announced that she had only been able to get two. Her eyes were lowered, but she was watching me.

"Dad, you'll have to take Sylvia. You two will enjoy it. Too deep for Lucy and me, that modern stuff, anyhow."

"Anything you say, Carol. Do you mind going with an old man, Mrs. Chester?" Clifford asked.

"As long as Lucy doesn't mind, I'd love it," she said.

All eyes turned toward me. I murmured something about not caring, and of course they went.

Sylvia looked very wonderful in the shimmering evening gown, and a pang went through me as Clifford held her wrap. Carol turned to me when they had gone. "That's the kind of a woman I would have picked for Dad! One we wouldn't be ashamed of."

"Well, Carol," I said, in a resigned way, "you are doing very well."

"I do believe you are jealous! Well, you should be. You see, Dad didn't mind taking her, very much. He surely does love having her around." Carol swung about and left me to my thoughts.

It was true. And in a cute, kittenish way, Sylvia was simply running the house, though she had been there only about ten days. I did not feel strong, so it was she who golfed with Clifford, cutting a smart figure in sport togs; it was she who rode

and drove with him; and in the evening it was she who danced with him to the radio. Carol was always inventing some way to leave them alone together. I realized how completely she had planned it all, and the thought made me very ill.

I went to bed, quite weak with strain, heart-ache, and worry. In the morning I awoke with a raging fever, and a physician was called. Clifford was beside himself with anxiety, and very attentive—although I could not understand why he wouldn't assert himself. I made the doctor promise to diagnose my case as a nervous breakdown. This he did, and suggested to Clifford a long trip for me. I could not bear Carol's attitude, as I knew it would be, towards my beautiful secret.

Sylvia was coldly polite, and Carol plainly rude. They suspected me of pretending to be ill to get Clifford away. Carol announced two or three days later that her Count from Paris was coming on soon. I was relieved, for I knew that if she married him I would have peace at last. Pillowed up by the open, French windows in the library, I heard the two girls talking in the garden.

"It's a shame. You were getting along wonderfully. She has more brains than I gave her credit for," I heard Carol say.

"He's an old darling! Why didn't you give me first chance? We have had such heaps of fun together," the voices drifted on.

Getting along wonderfully? Heaps of fun? I wondered if I was really losing Clifford's love. But why, then, had he planned to go with me? Planned this wonderful trip to San Francisco?

Clifford got a great deal of attention from both girls the day we left, but only once did Carol come to me.

"Well, Lucy, have a good time while it lasts," she said. "By the time you get back I may be a countess!" The last was more comforting than she knew.

Our trip was the happiest in the world. Seated in our snug compartment on the train, Clifford held me close to him.

"Dear little Lucy. It's good to have you alone. Like a second honey-moon. It's good to get away," he said.

"But you hate to leave Carol," I said.

WELL, we've been separated before, and she will be getting married soon. She certainly is a great girl... I can't say much for that Sylvia person, though. I'm worried about Carol seeing too much of her. I tried to get to know her, find out what kind of a girl she was, and she seems a little wrong.

I gasped, and drew closer to him.

"Do you think so?" I asked.

"I'm afraid so. You wouldn't see it. You're too sweet and good to judge a woman like that," he continued as he leaned over and kissed me. "But I guess Carol can take care of herself. Let's not worry, now. All you have to do now is to be happy with me."

"I'm awfully happy now, Cliff," I said. "I was getting so tired of it all, too."

"Well, we can stay away as long as you wish," he replied. "I could be happy any place in the world with my wife."

Oh, how wonderful those words sounded to me. After all the misery I had been through, it seemed as though my heart would burst with joy.

"Cliff, darling, lean down. I want to whisper something." I drew his head down and buried my face, while I told my secret. His arms tightened about me, his lips found mine, and clung there—in a kiss that was worth waiting and suffering for.

The Way of a Woman

[Continued from page 27]

we must have more money on which to live. Reluctantly, I also realized that Herman's blue eyes and pleasant voice were a pleasant gloss which completely covered any ambition and ability that he might have or develop. He was a good fellow, but he was still a tailor's helper making only fourteen dollars a week on which to support a wife and child. I saw now, for the first time, that he was never made to be a responsible head of a family. He had an artist's temperament. He should have tried to make his way in the field of music by means of his battered violin, which he played very sweetly when the mood was on him. But it was too late for all that now. We were married. We had one baby. Another was on the way. We needed money badly.

I decided that I would help my husband just as my mother had helped my father. I had hoped that I would be able to give all of my time to my little home, a tiny dream-cottage which I thought we would find somewhere. Instead of that, we were back in the shadows of the elevated, which always rumbled by. The structure stretched all the way across our narrow street and cut out all the sunlight except for a short time at noon.

I decided to do sewing. I had taken that up in school and was expert with a needle. I thought I might help Herman in his work, but he wouldn't hear of it. The idea of my helping angered him. When I convinced him that it was necessary, he was forced to agree reluctantly and said that if I had to do something it should be along other lines. His work was his. He was the head of the family. If he couldn't make a living, we'd just have to starve. His blue eyes flamed with anger. His smile turned to an impetuous frown. He was greatly troubled.

I quietly began to look about for other sewing that I might do. I knew someone else who made a little money by putting a dressmaking sign in her window. She had friends. She promised to help. Six months later I had enough work so that at the end of each week I could count from two to four dollars in the little tin box in which I kept my extra earnings.

One day I bought our second child a bright new baby dress and a pretty little doll. For the other child I bought a toy automobile, for Herman I bought a tie, and for myself, a handkerchief. I showed them to Herman, proudly, but he did not smile. He only frowned. He seemed jealous of my ability to help the family budget. He never wore the tie.

AFTER two more years Herman was still making less than sixty dollars a month. He was still a tailor's helper. I was making half as much as he, and I had been working only two years. Herman had been working nearly ten. The ugly contrast hurt me, but I said nothing. Between us, we got along quite well. As long as money matters were not mentioned, we were supremely happy. We moved uptown once more.

Five years later, when we had three healthy, radiant children, we were slowly drifting apart. I was making more than Herman now. I had quite a trade in dressmaking. I subscribed to the fashion magazines, made nice clothes for my children and myself, and brought a new spirit into our plain little home. Adding my income to Herman's gave us a sum that was quite substantial for the frugal ways of life that we still pursued.

But the more success that I enjoyed, the gloomier Herman got. He was not jealous of me, but of my work. I always put the

fashion magazines out of sight when evening came. They angered Herman. He seemed to think that they came between him and me. I never mentioned them. Herman thought we were still living on his much too meagre salary, not knowing how many of the bills I paid out of my own earnings without telling him about it. I did not mind. I liked to help, and I loved Herman. But he was still just a tailor's helper.

This troubled me greatly. He was older and still as gentle and loving as he always was, but he had not progressed. As he made an impression without saying anything, just so he handicapped himself by doing nothing but his routine work, something which someone else obtained and gave to him for finishing. I tried to show him this, tell him that he wasn't getting anywhere, that he should strike out for himself, but he only sulked. He thought I should mind my own business. He could not understand that his success or failure was as much my business as it was his. He finally admitted that his progress had been slow, but the admission hurt him greatly.

FIVE more years passed. Herman had finally doubled his salary. He was making almost thirty dollars a week. I was making nearly three times that much. When he asked me how I was getting on, I could not tell him the entire truth, so I said that I was doing as well as I had expected. Then I thought of the secret savings I had put away in the bank as a great and pleasant surprise for some future time. Instead of that, it proved to be the thing that subsequently wrecked my life.

By this time Herman was actually running a shop of his own, nearly fifteen years after he started work. He was as dream-eyed and lovable as ever. Our home was very cosy and comfortable, our children sweet and getting on well at school. One evening Herman was playing beautifully on his violin while I held our youngest child, Joel, near me. In moments like these my husband showed his artistic temperament, which was a strong part of his make-up. His blue eyes shone with pleasure as he swayed slightly to the sweet strains of music that he made. He looked radiant and wonderful to me.

At this time our little girl, who had reached the mischievous age of eight years, came running into the room toward her father, with a brown, paper-covered booklet in her hand. It was my bank-book, which I had not shown Herman yet. I trembled and asked the child to bring it to me, but it was too late. Herman had stopped playing and was opening the book in the light of a nearby floor lamp. As he turned it over in his hand he spoke.

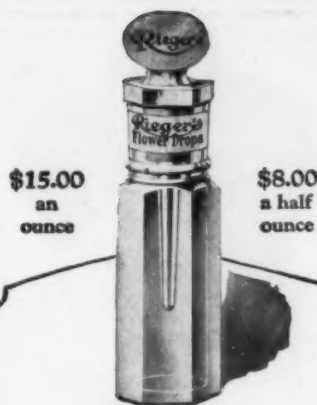
"What's this? A bank-book! Where did this come from?"

"Mama's drawer," the child answered, innocently explaining that she had been rumaging around "just for fun."

Herman began to read it, then his smile faded from his lips and his eyes blazed. In a shaky voice, vibrant with anger and emotion, he burst out:

"What does this mean? Eight hundred dollars in your name at the savings bank? You never told me! Why not?"

I feared a family crisis. Here I was silently defying my husband as to his business ability by having a bank account nearly eight times larger than our joint family account. I did not mean it that way, but I knew that Herman would not understand. I was laying it aside for the future, for us, for our children. I did not want to hurt Herman's feelings by letting



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him know. Surely he would understand me. "You want to run away from me bye and bye when you have more money?" he said tensely. "You're not satisfied with what I make? You think you're better than I am? I'll show you!" Then he savagely tore the bank-book in half.

At great length I pleaded with him, tried to show him that I was saving this as a surprise for him. I wanted to present him with a thousand-dollar bond; I wanted to help him, help our children. I told him that none of those terrible things which his uncomprehending, slow-moving mind had imagined really existed. And after a while I believe he saw the truth. He said that he was sorry; that he would say no more if I would agree to stop my work. We could afford to get along on what he was now making and what we had saved. He wanted me to stay at home and not be a business woman. He did not understand that I had done so from necessity, not from choice.

THEN I had to hurt him again. That morning I had just signed a lease on a small shop uptown which was to be my own. I had hired an assistant dressmaker. It was too late to undo these things. The lease was signed, a month's rent had been paid, the dressmaker was coming in the morning to help put things in order.

Herman was stunned when I told him. He looked at me, open-mouthed. Such a thing seemed unbelievable to him. He walked the room for nearly an hour without saying anything. His usually calm face flared with jealousy, jealousy of my work. My own heart ached and yearned to go out to him, but I knew that he was angry, incensed, and that the less I said the better it would be. Finally he announced hotly that he, too, was hiring an assistant in the morning. He would quickly make a good deal more than I, and then he would force me to stop this degrading business of working. He meant well, and the realization that he was hardly equal to the task of making even a moderate salary was bitter to him.

Thus we continued. We still loved each other, but Herman's business failure and my success was a thorn in the side of our happiness. Conscientious work that brought customers back soon resulted in my having one of the finest shops in town; I had a hired force of four, and my earnings began to mount into hundreds, with prospects of these figures being doubled and trebled in a few years.

AS TIME went on, Herman grew more morose; our children finished school and went to work or got married, so that four years ago Herman and I were back almost as we started, all alone, just he and I. His shop had grown some, it is true. By now he was making one hundred and fifty dollars a month, less than forty dollars a week, after a lifetime of labor! Secretly I felt sorry for him, but I said nothing. I still loved him more than anyone else in the world. In spite of his limitations and the years of privation we had suffered when we were first married, his blue eyes, a good deal older now, and his pleasant smile, a little wane now, still fascinated me, and the last time that he played his violin seemed sweeter than ever to me.

Joel had finished at the university and had just left for Chicago to take a position in the packing business. Herman and I had just returned to our little apartment after taking him to the train where we bade Joel good-by. The apartment suddenly seemed dreadfully empty with all of our children gone out into the world, so after I took off my wraps I sat down and asked Herman if he wouldn't play for me. He hadn't touched his violin for months.

He didn't answer my first question.

When I repeated it he picked up the ragged case in which he kept the old instrument and, without opening it, quickly broke it over his knee, crashing it in half and dropping the broken wreck into a nearby waste basket. He gave me a crushing glance, then left the room.

Herman broke my heart over his knee at the same time that he cracked his violin in half. I shall never forget that quiet, yet terrible scene. It was many minutes later when I raised my weary, tear-stained face from the depths of a sofa pillow and stared at me, dry-eyed, grim, shaking with emotion. I had wanted my Herman to play for me, to love me. We were going to live out the autumn of our lives in quiet, peace, and plenty. Since Herman had been unable to make enough money for that, I had done so, and now I wanted Herman to have it, to use it for us, to spend it all. Instead, he had broken my heart on his knee and flung it into the basket. But even after that I would have been ready to forgive, to take him back to me, had he ever come.

For weeks he never spoke, leaving for his shop early in the morning, coming back at night and quietly throwing himself on the davenport, where he slept fitfully through the night. Food which I prepared for him, he left untouched. His face and actions were a picture of jealousy.

Things quickly became intolerable. I could not bear to be shunned and insulted in our own home by the only man I had ever loved. I waited up for him one night and when he came in, I knew he had been working late, I almost threw my arms around him and begged him to forgive me, though I knew not why he should, for I had done no more than try to help him. But his grim face deterred me, and I kept to my original purpose. I said quietly that unless he changed his actions he would find me gone the next evening when he should return. He didn't even stop to hear me speak. By the time I had finished my sentence he was already lying down on the davenport.

DRY-EYED and miserable, I moved away the next morning, after spending a sleepless night of indecision. Should I leave my home, the only one in which we had been able to enjoy at least a few of life's comforts? Could I leave the place that held so many pleasant memories, the home from which I had sent our children to college and into life? Could I leave my husband? But I had no husband anymore. He had left me many weeks before, even though I saw him night and morning. There was no reason for me to stay, to make two lives miserable in place of one. If I should leave, perhaps Herman, at least, would be happy again. As for me, he had suddenly cut himself out of my life; my affection for him was deadened, as lifeless as a piece of stone. I left with no regrets.

A year later I got a legitimate divorce on grounds of desertion. Herman did not contest. He did not even appear at the trial. He ignored me entirely. It did not matter, anyway. My love for him had been killed. I thought I was sure of that. But as has often been said, life is a curious puzzle. In spite of the great injustice I had suffered, I later was startled to find that perhaps my love still lived.

Four years of loneliness have passed since then—utter, miserable loneliness. I have associated with no one, gone nowhere. I have tried to erase the bitter past completely from my mind, but the man who won my heart still haunts me in my waking and sleeping hours. I do not run my shop now. I do not need to, for I sold out at a handsome profit and have a balance in the bank that runs into five figures. Perhaps I ought to be satisfied, but a woman who has fully loved as I have done cannot

suddenly be set adrift and expected not to suffer. I wish I had known that sooner.

For the past four weeks I have been receiving a money order for ten dollars. With the first one there was a note which shocked me. It was in Herman's scrawly handwriting, which I knew so well, and which I had once loved. He said that he was making about fifty dollars a week now and wanted to pay me back for some of the things I had done so he would send me ten dollars every Saturday. There would be no use in my returning the money order, he wrote, for if I did he would not redeem it but destroy it, and the money would thus be forfeited. I looked at his familiar handwriting and broke down and cried. After all his unjust cruelty I wanted him back, oh, so badly!

His letter put me into a daze which lasted for half a week. I did not care for anything, could think of nothing but Herman. And how I wished he were by my side once more! I needed his company, his caresses, his scoldings. I finally got so desperate that I had to go by his shop. That, too, startled me, and began a flood of haunting, loving memories. The place was painted, cleaned, and brightened. There were several customers within. I had never known that to happen before. Hurdled I passed by, crying silently as I walked along.

TWENTY-FIVE years ago tomorrow, Herman and I walked down the center aisle of the dilapidated little tenement church and pledged our undying love for each other.

That is why I am glad that Joel, my son, is coming to see me tomorrow on my birthday and my anniversary. My other two children cannot get away. Joel looks like Herman, and Joel understands and tries to comfort me. He is a good boy. While he is with me I shall be very happy and live over again our better and younger days—when Herman was still with us; when the sweet tone of his violin broke the evening stillness and spoke to us of beauty and enchanting fairylands.

When Joel leaves me my heart will ache again, ache for Herman—for my husband. I would gladly turn the hands of the clock back for years, to the time when we were still struggling to make both ends meet, to pay our bills, to buy a little coal to keep out the winter, if Herman would only come back and fondle me; tell me softly that he still loves me; play his battered old violin once more, so that I may watch his pale blue eyes and listless smiling features. I still love him. Money or lack of it, I have found, can never change that love. Perhaps he will read this and come back to me. I want him.

L. M. T.
Neosho, Wisc.

A YOUNG man from the city had "hired out" to a farmer. At four o'clock in the morning the newly employed hired man was called to breakfast. In a few minutes the old farmer was astonished to see the man walking off down the road.

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"I ain't goin' to work," the young man called back; "I'm going to find a place to stay all night."

Mrs. W. E. B.,
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34x4 1/2	4.25	1.85
32x4 1/4	4.75	2.00
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That's the Whole Trouble

[Continued from page 72]

"flapper" you had previously considered him. The fact that a particular girl was waiting to be "walked" around the lake meant nothing to those youths. They were always ready for a "petting-party." If you refused to venture out into the night with them, you were immediately dubbed a rotten sport, and ever after left to your own devices.

Anybody is far better than nobody; therefore, I had decided it was best to give in to the proposed promenade. But it always ended unpleasantly; a "petting-party" failed to lure me. I heartily dislike the term "petting-party." In my day, we never called it that, and, anyway, at twenty-six one becomes a little weary—that is, of these "collegiate style" boys.

I continued passing the time in this fashion for almost a week, when a tall, dark, serious-looking man of about thirty-five appeared. You can imagine my joy when I saw him seated at the dinner table. He was very handsome, with a slight touch of grey in his hair, which at all times lends distinction, and among this array of callow youths, its value was double-fold.

His name, Lester Ladd, appealed to me, and as he thought my name, Leila Lawe, rather nice, we got along swimmingly. There was something very interesting about him—something almost sad, which I noticed immediately; but I didn't discover what it was until long afterwards.

He didn't care for the noisy gathering of flappers any more than I did, and we began to go off on excursions together. We would be away the entire day, either walking and climbing some steep mountain, or paddling along the smooth water, stopping in some lovely secluded spot for our lunch, which we always carried with us. We would only return to the hotel around six o'clock, and as soon as we had rested and dressed for the evening, would meet for dinner, and then dance. How he danced! None of that modern dancing, where all kinds of capers are cut, but real dancing. He even loved waltzes.

I WILL admit I was flattered by Lester's attention. I couldn't imagine why he had singled me out from this vast horde of girls, although it was true that outside of the flappers, the only other girls were the "old" ones. They were of the serious, almost matronly type, who immediately powdered their noses and added another touch of rouge and lip-stick at the glimpse of an eligible man. As soon as Lester had arrived, they had marched up to him phalanx-like, and proceeded to bewilder him with a volley of questions. He hadn't responded very warmly to these advances, and their consternation was great when he claimed me for the first dance!

Lester liked jolly people, and I was one of the jolliest girls, if not the jolliest, at Forrest Hall—not barring the flappers! Everyone diligently watched our romance progress, and succeeded in making us quite uncomfortable by talking more than I think is even necessary at a summer hotel. This doesn't refer to the flappers—due credit must be given them; they weren't a bit interested in Lester—he was far too old and serious. But, the other girls—the "rouge and lip-stick brigade"—never forgave themselves when they heard that he was rich and had been to Europe three times!

Well, we had a wonderful time. It really was divine. We were with each other from morning to night, the seven or eight days at Forrest Hall. During the day we'd be out alone most of the time, and in the evening we would dance, which was a fitting end for a perfect day. Then we

would walk around the lake, after a while choosing a less trodden path, where our love-making could be more private.

Lester doesn't care for "petting-parties" either. In fact he is so much of the old school that he doesn't exactly understand that term. He is the type who would never kiss a girl—the right sort of girl—unless he had serious intentions, or thought the world of her. Kissing means something very sacred to him, something to be nurtured and not abused in the present-day manner.

We continued taking these beautiful moonlight walks for six nights, I very much in love with Lester, who was peculiarly silent though loving. He never proposed, nor did he say anything definite regarding his feelings for me. The most committing thing he ever said was:

"Leila, you are the sweetest woman I ever knew."

AFTER the reiteration of this fact for six evenings, without any variation whatsoever, but merely fortified by a puzzling silence, I grew a little weary. The silence became almost maddening!

I was determined that our romance should reach a climax my last night at Forrest Hall, and—heaven knows!—it did. The day had been perfect. Lester had been very sad at the thought of my departure, and had decided that he couldn't remain at Forrest Hall without me. He would accompany me back to the city.

I was elated; I dressed for the evening with wild joy. We danced almost every dance together, and slipped out for our nightly walk a little earlier than usual.

The night was beautiful. I have never seen a more perfect sky and moon. We sat down on the little bench which we had come to regard as our own. It faced the lake, and was hidden from the hotel by a thick cluster of trees. Lester seemed sad, and I asked him what was bothering him. For a while he didn't answer; he merely sat there moodily, mysteriously shaking his head, finally exclaiming:

"Yes, Leila, I am sad—very sad. I don't think I'll ever be happy again!" He buried his face in his arms.

I looked at him and was moved by his tragic countenance. I nestled a little closer to him, until his arm crept around my waist, and then I softly asked:

"What makes you so unhappy, Lester?"

I was puzzled. I couldn't see any reason for his sadness. Here we were together, without any thought of parting. Everything seemed quite perfect to me.

"Oh, Leila," he moaned, pressing my hand frantically, "I'm so unhappy—so lonely—my poor wife—!"

I gasped and quickly withdrew from his arms.

Lester had a wife—he was married! My God! I felt as though an iron beam had fallen on my head. It was bad enough to tell me that he was lonely, while I sat there beside him, but nonchalantly informing me that he had a wife! I felt that the very trees must be quivering at this revelation.

"What?" I burst out. "You are married—?"

"Not any more," he sadly muttered; "my wife died nearly two years ago!"

I sat back, intensely relieved. She, at any rate, was dead. It had been one of my rules never to play around with a married man, much less fall in love with one, and the fact that Lester was a widower made me feel much better.

But why these moans? I was a little piqued. Here he'd been making love to me, letting me think I was everything to

him, and all the time he'd been nursing this sorrow. He had never let a word drop of his marriage, never made the slightest hint—and—we'd been together almost constantly for a whole week!

I turned to him rather sternly, but as I saw his handsome face drawn together in misery, my anger melted. There was something so pathetic about him, and even though he had shattered my faith I was very much in love with him.

"Yes, Lelia," he said, reclaiming my hand, "I am so lonely, so unhappy. And my little boy—I don't know what to do with him. At present, my sister is taking care of him, but I don't know what to do with myself. I'm utterly miserable; I don't care what happens. I think," he uttered, staring dejectedly into the lake, "that fathomless stretch of dark water would be a proper refuge. I think I will," he added under his breath. "What's the use?"

I WAS terrified. Pride or no pride, Lester's tragic plight startled me. I couldn't let him drown himself, and as he gazed despairingly about, I leaned over, pressed his hand, and gently murmured:

"I'm so sorry. I didn't have any idea . . . I didn't know you were married."

Then he told me how devoted he'd been to his wife, and how happy they'd been the five years of their married life. He had never thought of anything ever interrupting it. But, one day she had met with an automobile accident, and inside of a week she had died!

It isn't awfully pleasant to listen to anyone rave intimately about another person,

and when the man you adore rants about his deceased wife, it is practically unbearable. I alternated between sympathy and anger, but every time I grew rigid and moved away Lester renewed his threats of jumping into the lake, and though I thought he had trifled with my affections, I couldn't let him plunge to death. Besides, I loved him!

Can I ask him if he loves his wife better than he does me? I feel that she is a dangerous rival, far more powerful than if she were alive, for then I could at least talk about her to Lester and face the situation squarely. As it is, I have to be cautious so as not to trespass on Lester's feelings; I can't question him in any way. His innermost feelings and memories belong to him entirely; they are his sacred possessions! I have great respect for the feeling one bears a deceased loved one, and even if Lester hadn't raised this barrier, but had talked freely and intimately of his wife, I still would have felt timid in broaching this subject. It is such a very delicate matter.

I do feel, however, that a year is ample time to overcome that sensitiveness, but perhaps Lester doesn't think it is sufficient time to show respect. If I did venture to put this question to him, he might never forgive me for so brutally disregarding all fine feeling.

If I only knew what to do! I must decide before Lester returns from the West this month.

Six months seems an interminably long time for a man to "rush" a girl, and—just talk about his dead wife.

Can I ask him *whom* he loves better?

What Would You Have Done?

[Continued from page 52]

when he urged her to leave Father and me behind, and accompany him to some distant country where they could live the kind of lives both enjoyed, with none to question.

When, at eighteen, I was permitted to leave the institute, I was at a loss to know how to proceed. Though determined to take up my task of locating Frederick Holden, I had to accept delay, for I possessed nothing but the clothing I wore and the ten-dollar bill doled me with my discharge paper. Hoping to obtain a job in an office or store which would pay sufficient for me to support myself and save something toward beginning my quest, I applied to some of the men I had known in my happier years. The result was just another bitter lesson from the book of experience. Some offered gifts of small sums of money—which I refused—but there was none willing to give employment to a former "charity girl" with no business experience.

Finally, my last pennies spent and hungry, I obtained work as a housemaid. In that place I remained a full year, striving to increase my knowledge as much as possible by reading. Then I put aside my wages, except the little I was compelled to spend for actual necessities. And, with Frederick Holden never long absent from my thoughts, I never retired without reading the papers, for through them I hoped to obtain a clue to his whereabouts. But nothing ever came of that. The fact that he had sold the motor in Chicago was my only clue—and hoping that chance might enable me to pick up his trail there. I finally headed for that city with nearly three hundred dollars in my possession.

However, the magnitude of Chicago fairly stunned me, and within the day following my arrival I realized the almost hopeless task I had set myself—to find one

man in such a monster civic beehive. And my hopes received a further check when I failed to find his name in the general, telephone, or business directories. My conclusion was that, even if in Chicago, he had changed his name.

I obtained a room in a modest lodging-house, and again tried for reasonably paid clerical work. But inexperience once more defeated me, and I soon found that my surplus was disappearing with distressing rapidity. However, I had to live and I had to obtain money to continue my search for Holden; so, at the suggestion of a girl who lived in the same house, I put aside my business ambitions and went to work as a restaurant waitress. Little experience was needed for that job and it paid well, enabling me to save again. Six months' faithful service was not devoid of reward, and I obtained the post of cashier in the place.

THEN Joe Wheeler came into my life, and almost from the beginning of our acquaintance it appeared as if he were destined to swerve me from my purpose. A few years older than I, a bit taller, with the straight and sturdy body of one who had been much in the open, he was attractive even in the rough clothing he wore during his labors as a supervising electrician. And his plainness of features was more than balanced by his genial disposition.

I met him almost as soon as he came to room at the place where I lived, and we were drawn to each other from the first. From good pals we soon became great friends, and from his confidences I learned of his early struggles. Born poor, he had waged a long, desperate fight to get through an engineering college. Then, from a most humble post in his chosen profession, he had worked his way to his



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Simply get an ounce of Othine—double strength—from any drug or department store and apply a little of it night and morning and you should soon see that even the worst freckles have begun to disappear, while the lighter ones have vanished entirely. It is seldom that more than an ounce is needed to completely clear the skin and gain a beautiful complexion.

Be sure to ask for the double strength Othine as this is sold under guarantee of money back if it fails to remove your freckles.

We recommend Othine Complexion Soap for use with Othine, also as a shampoo—it's wonderful for bobbed hair—25c a cake at all drug or department stores or by mail. Othine Laboratories, Inc., Buffalo, N. Y.

present place, with every prospect of becoming a recognized expert within a few years.

I told him little of my own past and nothing of Frederick Holden. And I was glad I had not explained my purpose in coming to Chicago, for, as the weeks grew into months, our splendid companionship grew into a much stronger attachment. At times I even thought of abandoning my apparently hopeless quest and devoting my interest entirely to the man I realized was only waiting for an expected promotion to ask me to marry him.

But, while I was debating my future course, my pledge for vengeance was recalled with startling suddenness. One morning the newspapers announced that a new type of motor, purchased some years before by one of the city's leading financiers from its inventor, Frederick Holden, after certain improvements and many tests, was about to be placed upon the market.

WITH that information I knew how to proceed, for my big city experiences had considerably sharpened my wits. And the thought that I might yet bring the slayer of my father and mother to his knees revived all my old hatred for him. Without delay I visited a lawyer, showed him the clipping and told him I would pay liberally for any information he could obtain concerning Holden, and particularly his present whereabouts. Within a day he told me all it was possible to learn in Chicago. The purchaser of the patent had made four payments to Holden. One he received before the murder, the next two were sent to him in Argentine, and the fourth one reached him in New York. There was no later record concerning him.

New York then was the place to which I must go on a chance of picking up the long lost trail. And I determined to take the step without delay. Of course, when I informed Joe that, for a time, we must be separated, he demanded an explanation. There was nothing to do but to tell him everything, and I revealed the incidents of my bitter past and insisted that I was in duty bound to fulfill my pledge to Nancy. He tried to dissuade me, but to no purpose. The lust for revenge had returned too strong to be denied, even though I was uncertain of the steps I would take should I locate Frederick Holden.

But, before we parted, my sweetheart made me promise not to resort to violence or place myself in conflict with the law. The only thing which prevented him from accompanying me was that he had a contract to supervise some important work on the Pacific Coast. But he would join me, he said, just as soon as that was completed.

Reaching the great eastern city I again consulted the directories. They revealed nothing. The outlook appeared to be that I faced a long hunt—and probably without result. In a period of more than six years Holden probably had assumed another name and, perhaps, had succeeded in altering his appearance. And, though he might be hidden among New York's six millions, the chances were that he was on the other side of the world.

But I was determined not to give up without a real effort. My plan included reading the newspapers night and morning for a possible clue, as well as searching the streets, particularly those in the gayer quarters, for a chance sight of him. I had little difficulty in obtaining a post as a cashier, which paid me a fair wage, and night after night, when my labors were completed, I watched at the entrances to the theatres, cabarets and clubs.

Months of effort proved fruitless, but I continued my nightly vigils.

Many, many times I was tempted to

send for Joe, but pride and a desire not to interfere with his work kept me from doing so. When I finally was pronounced on the road to recovery, my entire savings had gone to doctors, nurses and for other expenses, and I actually was existing on the charity of my warm-hearted landlady. I am certain if my sweetheart had appeared before me then I should have thrown myself into his arms and forever foresworn my scheme for vengeance.

I think the fact that I owed money to another spurred me on toward rapid recovery, but my landlady—though dependent upon her roomers for her support—absolutely refused to permit me to return to work until the doctor said I might. Then, for a considerable period, I was so engrossed in striving to recover my full strength and pay my debt that I shunted to the background all thought of Frederick Holden.

However, when June came with its roses and sunshine, I was again physically fit and had paid the last cent I owed. And my thoughts were mostly of Joe and what the month might have meant for us but for the mission which circumstances had compelled me to neglect. I experienced frequent periods of depression, because of my failure to learn anything, and it is possible that, had I continued in the dark much longer, I would have put aside further thoughts of revenge and gone where my heart prompted—to my far away sweetheart.

But, in that period of indecision, a clue which promised to lead me directly to the killer, came with lightning suddenness. As I unfolded my newspaper one morning, the likeness of Frederick Holden stared at me from an inner page. For a moment the shock turned me giddy, blurred my eyes. However, when I was able to read, I noted an unfamiliar name—"Herbert Graham"—beneath the picture. Yet I felt certain of the face. I would not believe there was another with features so like those of the slayer of my father and mother. That he was using an assumed name was to have been expected. And if "Herbert Graham" were Holden, it explained one of the reasons why I had been delayed in locating my quarry.

The item beneath the portrait strengthened my surmise. The man Graham had just returned from Europe where, over a long period, he had been engaged in perfecting an invention which would increase the output of any steel mill using it. The print also stated he would occupy offices with one of the city's leading financial firms—the name and address being given—which would back him in marketing his invention. The excitement of my discovery gripped and held me. Once again all other thoughts vanished before my desire for vengeance.

HOWEVER, though I felt that the long-awaited settling of accounts with Frederick Holden was almost at hand, I determined to move carefully and deliberately. First, I must make absolutely certain that Graham and the man I sought were one and the same. That point settled in the affirmative, I would perfect a plan for revenge which would not miscarry.

I realized the quickest way to learn the truth was to gain access to his office and study him at close range. But I lacked the training to obtain a position there, even should there be a vacancy. And, furthermore, I feared to meet and be questioned by him, lest he recognize me and conjure some way to outwit me.

Finally, however, I hit upon a better plan. Disguising myself in shabby clothing and counterfeiting a slattern as best I could, I applied for work as a char-woman

at the building occupied by the financial firm noted. I was employed at once. Three days later, in the room which had been turned over to Graham, I managed to prolong my tasks until he arrived. He scarcely noted me, but I studied everything about him, his walk, his gestures, his speech. And within minutes I knew I had found my man. He was the same Frederick Holden as in the past, confident, masterful and carefully groomed, and with little to mark the passage of the years save the gray in his hair. And he played directly into my hands by telephoning an acquaintance that he had leased a house in a fashionable park section, giving the number, where he intended to maintain bachelor quarters for a time.

Exultant, and very confident that I soon would be in a position to bring Holden to his knees, I hastened home. That night I wrote Joe of my discovery and that I anticipated a speedy accomplishment of my mission would bring our enforced separation to an end.

It took considerable scheming before I fixed upon a plan which would keep me in close touch with Holden—if it succeeded. It savored of trickery, but thoughts of the past silenced any qualms of conscience. The following morning I went to the address he had mentioned, stated that I had been sent from an agency to fill a post somewhere in the block, but had forgotten the address. The housekeeper, then recruiting a force of servants as I had anticipated, stated that while she had not yet applied to an agency, she would be glad to employ me. Reference to the landlady with whom I had lived since reaching the city served as my passport.

Before the close of the day—as Jennie Arnold, and in the uniform of a maid—I was established in the Holden home. And I met him in the main hallway, face to face, as he passed from the dining-hall to the library. That meeting banished all fear that he would recognize me. Only for an instant did his eyes question, as if he recalled someone half-forgotten, then he passed on.

From the outside of his open library door, while he talked with his intimates, I learned that while in Europe he had become engaged to the daughter of the senior member of the firm which was to back him financially; a lady considerably younger than he, and one gracing the inner circle of metropolitan society. That information explained the identity of the portrait of a very beautiful woman upon his reading table.

The knowledge of his contemplated marriage increased my bitterness, made me more determined to inflict the punishment I believed he deserved. For it recalled the tragedies which followed his professed love for my mother. Now another woman with unusually lovely features had appealed to his fancy. Surely no man more callous and cold-blooded walked the earth.

MY first plan was to go directly to the father of his promised bride and tell him of the past Holden had sought to hide under an assumed name. From what I had learned of the family into which Holden expected to marry caused me to believe that any breath of scandal would cause the match to be broken off. And that would defeat his schemes. But the more I thought it over, the less certain I was of its success. I knew and respected the cleverness of the man, and began to fear that he would talk himself out of any position into which I might force him. Finally I decided it was best to postpone my exposure until after the wedding, when he would have committed a serious offense by going through the ceremony under a false name, a circumstance he would be unable to explain away. If necessary to

"How I hoped you couldn't swim!"

THE flush of her radiant cheek as she cut the water in clean, swift strokes had aroused his chivalry. He had longed to rescue her, to do some heroic deed worthy of her vivid, glowing youth. But she had raced him far out to the pier and back. And now, with cheeks aglow, she sat in the full glare of the sunlit beach, rosier and lovelier than when she had started!

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fulfill my purpose, I would take my story to the newspapers.

Perhaps you think my decision wicked. But remember I always had before me the picture of my parents betrayed by a trusted intimate who had accepted their hospitality; of my father murdered in cold blood and my mother crippled and insane until a merciful death claimed her.

With my course fixed upon, I waited—waited until after the wedding and the honeymoon; until Frederick Holden brought his beautiful wife to live in his home.

From that moment I regretted that I had delayed my revenge. For Myrtle Graham was one hundred per cent true woman, as kind as she was lovely, always thoughtful of the comforts of even the humblest of those who worked for her. Almost immediately she chose me as her personal maid, treating me more as a confidant than a servant. And it hurt and stung me when I realized how deeply she was in love with a husband so unworthy of her.

After a time my existence became a constant torment, a never-ending battle between my growing affection for my mistress and my determination to fulfill my pledge to Nancy to make Frederick Holden suffer as he had me and mine. But the days slipped into weeks and the weeks into months, and still I hesitated. I could not quite nerve myself to act.

However, it was when the wife of the man I hated, her eyes amidst with tears of joy, confided that she was looking forward to the coming of a little one, that I all but abandoned my purpose. I cried myself to sleep that night. And had she remained in her home, I am sure I should have fled from New York without speaking.

But, being far from a robust type, she joined her parents in a trip to the Southland to prepare herself for the coming ordeal. She urged me to accompany her, but I succeeded in begging off. I wanted once again to be free to debate my course, to determine the fate of my parents' slayer without her near-presence to influence me.

It was a full week following her departure, a week in which I battled with myself night and day, before I reached a final decision. And my purpose once arrived at, I determined to carry it out that very evening—before the torment under which I existed broke me mentally and physically.

As the customary time for the termination of the dinner approached, I slipped into the main hallway and concealed myself behind portieres of a window. Directly opposite was the doorway through which soon would appear the man who, after years of bitter waiting, I was prepared to drag from his position of fancied security.

THE wait was not long, only minutes. But it seemed interminable, as I crouched waiting, my nerves seemingly held in a frozen calm despite my impatience for action. Then Frederick Holden came into my line of vision, immaculate in the evening attire which he always wore at dinner, even when alone, humming dreamily, softly, as he passed close to my hiding place. I watched him enter the library, then tip-toed to the entrance. He was seated beside a great centre table, smoking, engrossed in the evening paper and oblivious to my nearness until I had stepped into the room, swung shut the doors and snapped the lock.

At the sound he wheeled sharply. And the surprised look he flashed as he recognized me and noted I had secured the room against intruders, was echoed in his voice as he queried sharply: "What is it you wish, Jennie?"

Replying with a shrug, I advanced until I faced him across the table, the lights from the cluster lamp above showing full upon our faces. The moment of sinister silence which followed must have conveyed to him a subtle warning of imminent danger. He drew a long breath, deep and hard. "Unless you explain yourself, I shall ring for some one to remove you." He shot the words at me in a low, angry rasp.

I laughed tantalizingly. My long delayed hour to apply the lash had come at last. Then I leaned across the table until my face was so close to his that I noted the light of uncertain fear which came into his eyes.

"No," I replied. "You won't ring to have me removed—Frederick Holden."

AT the pronouncement of his name—the name he long had believed forever buried in the misty past—he started as if to rise, then dropped back limply into his chair. Lines of agony etched themselves in his face; his muscles corded themselves under the strain.

"What—what name was that you called me? I don't know it. You must be mad."

"You're cornered, Holden. Don't lie." In my anger I struck my hand upon the table. "Perjury won you freedom from a sentimental jury—but I'm the one person in the world you can't trick. Look at me closely, you murderer. Look—Don't you know me? Think, think back."

For a moment he stared, tense and rigid. Then his face suddenly went frost white. "Great God!" he gasped. "It can't be—not little Jeanne."

"No, not little Jeanne," I taunted. "But Jeanne grown up; Jeanne hardened by the years of living hell into which you forced her; Jeanne whose father and mother you killed; Jeanne come to collect the debt the law denied her."

"You're mad, girl, mad. I'm Graham, not Holden. You can't prove otherwise." His cry was fierce, but his fear was blatant, desperate, disgusting.

"Listen carefully, Holden," I replied. "I can prove everything I know—and to the one you fear more than the law. I can convince your wife, the mother of your unborn child."

At my words all show of bravado left him. He sank further back into his chair, shrunken, beaten, his red-shot eyes staring at me helplessly.

It may have been seconds or an hour that we faced each other across the fearful chasm of the past. Then, struggling frantically to regain his composure, he hunched forward. "Tell me," his words came in a raw gasp. "What are you really going to do? Not the fearful thing you said—surely. You're a woman. You couldn't blast the life of one so innocent, one who never had harmed—"

"Stop, Holden. What right have you to beg for mercy? Did you ever show any? Those you sacrificed were as innocent as the woman you married. Did it ever matter in the slightest that you robbed me of everything which was my birthright?"

"I'll right some of the wrong," he interrupted. "You shall have money—thousands—hundreds of thousands, anything—" But he paused. My look had told him that he had blundered.

"Holden," and I dropped into a chair directly facing him. "For years I have been waiting for this night. From the very day I learned the truth concerning my father's killing and your vicious wickedness toward my mother, I have worked, schemed and struggled for this hour. Now I am going to tell you what you compelled me to go through, the poverty, the drudgery and the heartaches; the sacrifices I made to hold to my purpose to track

you down. You are going to hear them, from the beginning. And when I have finished, tell me if you think you deserve mercy at my hands."

He listened, fascinated—like a hunted animal at bay. But he did not speak.

Then, at times calmly and dispassionately, I told him of my struggles, my long wait until I had unearthed him, the cunning I employed to get him into a position from which he could not escape.

"And you have gone hungry?" He put the question dully when I had finished. That bit of physical suffering appeared to stand out in his addled understanding. And it sent me hot with anger.

"Yes," I replied bitterly, "I went hungry and cold, and I was ill—for a long time—existing upon the charity of others. But what was that compared to the loss of my parents?"

"Yes, I know," he stammered. "God, if I only could undo the past!" He ran his fingers through the strands of hair which hung moist upon his forehead. "I suppose it is useless to plead further; that I have reached the end. When are you going to tell my wife?" His look was that of a condemned criminal waiting sentence to the chair.

My head swam. There was a rushing in my ears. For a full moment my hatred for the wretch before me choked me. Then—

"I am not going to tell her!"

"You—you are not—"

"No!"

"Then—you will take the money."

"No, damn you, no!"

As he watched me, with the look of one half-crazed, only dully comprehending, I arose.

"Do you mean you forgive?" he blurted.

"No, never. I shall hate you till my dying day."

"But I do not understand. Why—"

"No, you don't understand, Frederick Holden. You couldn't. But I shall explain why I am going to put aside my vengeance; why I shall permit you to go on living a lie. It is because of the innocent woman I would have to drag down with you, because I would have to blast her faith for all time. For—God help her—she loves you. For days and days I have fought against myself to make this sacrifice. But I just couldn't bring myself to strike her down—I couldn't."

"But you are without means. What will you do?"

I laughed harshly. As if anything concerning me could matter to him; particularly now that I had pledged his safety.

"I'll tell you, Frederick Holden, what I am going to do. I am going to a man who really loves me. A man who tried to dissuade me from my purpose to make you pay the debt you owe. The man who first made me doubt the course I had planned was right."

"You are kinder than I deserve. I wish—"

"Don't say it," I almost screamed. "Good wishes from you would be a mockery. Now I am going—never to see you again, I hope. But you will not be able to forget me or your crimes again. Tonight I have shown you yourself—the hideous thing you are. And in the future, every time you look upon your wife—and the child to come—you will think of those you killed, of me, of your thefts and your deceit. And always you are going to stand in dread that a power higher than the justice of the man-made courts will strike at you through your family for the evils you have done."

At the doorway I turned and looked back. Frederick Holden lay slumped over the table, his head upon his arms, his body quivering with the sobs which racked him.



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My Mountain Violin

[Continued from page 60]

But I dared not think more about it. I must go away; I must go back to Frank. And after this little glimpse into what it would mean to have my mind and soul at rest and my aching heart quieted by a love that was both sanctuary and reward . . .

But the time came for me to go and I stayed.

Love, real love—even glimpsed from afar and as unattainable as the stars—was still too sweet to my starved senses to be relinquished easily.

I think Mervin knew. There were many times when he started to speak and I grew tremulous and warm with fear that I would not be strong enough to resist him; but each time, he spoke through the medium of his music.

Then came Frank's letter, demanding to know why I had not appeared in time to join the party, as arranged.

"I must go back," I told Mervin then.

"To the city?" he mused.

I only nodded. We sat in silence for a long time, on the soft moss, while at my feet the spring bubbled on serenely. Above us, scores of birds chirped and called through the leafy mystery of the trees, and the scent of moist-growing things pressed upon my consciousness.

"You do not want to go back," Mervin said at last.

"No," I almost whispered.

"I have found happiness here," he said. "You could, too, I know. If you could not, you would not respond to the things I play."

It was the way he spoke always; never a question, always a statement, as though he knew my very soul. And yet I knew he could not know the truth and I dared not tell him.

"You know, too," he said with gentle insistence, "that I want you to stay."

Suddenly I realized that if I stayed here another moment, I should not have the strength to go; that if his hands reached out and took my shoulders, held me close to him, I should never leave.

I swayed to my feet and, impulsively leaning over, took his head between my hands.

I WANT to stay, too, but—I can't—daring!" I cried, with a swift, hysterical sob. And pressing a little kiss upon his forehead, I turned and ran.

I heard him cry out something unintelligible, but I did not turn back. I knew that I should never, so long as the years went on, forget the look in his eyes as I kissed him, nor the way his dark hair fell down over his smooth forehead.

At Mrs. Bream's house, I went directly to my room. I wanted to pack my things and get out, yet I hadn't the strength. Frank had told me to wire a reply to his letter that morning. I had forgotten it.

I sat looking up the slope toward where the spring was hidden by a mass of thick-growing trees, and my eyes were filled with tears.

There was so much that I was leaving, and yet I dared not turn back. My heart ached for what I had placed forever behind me—the love that all my life I had dreamed of secretly; yet I knew I had taken my own path and must keep within it.

I was still fighting within myself when I heard Frank's voice on the floor below, speaking to Mrs. Bream, and I knew that he had got tired of waiting to hear from me and that the fight was over.

My heart leaped with sudden fear that gave way at last to mute resignation. Now it was indeed too late to turn back!

Before I could recover myself, I heard him hurrying up the stairs and opening the door to my room.

He stood staring at me across the space of dark. I could just see his pale face in the doorway, like a pale blot.

"What does it mean, Marie?" he asked finally, after a long silence.

My lips were quivering. "I—I don't know, Frank. I haven't been able to—find out . . ."

I waited. I waited for him to tell me with his quiet command that I must pack up instantly and go back with him. That was all I needed. I was ready to obey without a murmur.

There was a dreadful tugging at my heartstrings in that second that seemed so prolonged; many warring emotions rose before my vision. I despised myself for being so quiescent, for sitting there only awaiting his word. I called myself a coward because I had not the courage to send him away.

I had not. There was no love behind me, I felt. Only myself. And I was bitterly alone.

HOW I needed someone—just someone who loved me without thought of self! How I longed in that moment for some beloved voice to give me the courage to take the right road!

I heard Frank draw in his breath to speak. I waited, without a sound.

"You had better get packed," he was saying quietly. "Get packed and come back with me tonight . . ."

Then suddenly I became aware of another sound, as I had that night of the terrific storm—the sound of Mervin's violin!

It was borne in through my open window upon the crest of a breath of air damp with woodsmoke at twilight, and its message was simple and profound as the very heart of the age-old woods.

It stilled all the warring emotions inside me. I was at peace again.

Also, I understood. It was the soul of the musician, speaking to me across the dark spaces of our own forests. In some vague way, it told me that whether he knew or not, he would understand . . .

It was the voice of someone who loved me—the voice I had waited for in vain in my every hour of fear and hesitation, down through the years!

I stood up, while the melody, faint and far away, kept on.

"I'm not going back, Frank."

He caught his breath. "That is definite, Marie?"

"Yes." I dared not look at him.

He breathed deeply. "I was afraid of that," he said, almost without emotion. "I'm sorry, but—I understand."

He put out his hand and took mine firmly. "Whatever you say, dear, and I hope you have chosen right. But if you find that you haven't—sometime later on—remember that I'll always want you!"

He was gone. I found tears in my eyes.

That is why I could not hate Frank. Because in everything, from the beginning to the end, he had been so fair.

A little later, I went out. From somewhere in the deep woods, hushed now with night, the violin was still playing. An owl hooted through the trees.

I wanted to find Mervin and tell him everything; tell him, too, how his message had sustained me when I needed it most; tell him that I had made my great resolve and that, for better or for worse, I was going out to make my own fight against the world that had condemned me.

[Turn to page 102]

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My Mountain Violin

[Continued from page 100]

And all for the sake of the love I had for him.

I found him by following the music, treading a lightly defined path that wound through the tall, cathedral-like trees. He was in an open, moonlit space between two great, upstanding poplars. As I approached him, his playing ceased.

"You heard?" he asked simply.

"I heard," I said. "It was what I needed." And then I proceeded to pour out in halting, yet rapid phrases, the whole wretched story.

He listened in silence, his features unchanging. When I had finished, he laid down his violin and caught both my hands in his.

"I want to know only one thing, Marie," he demanded. "You love me. And this—the sacrifice and the renunciation—was all for that?"

"All for you," I said gently. "Because I love you. But that doesn't mean anything, dear. You've shown me the way. You've given me the courage. I shan't ask you for more."

IT'S too late to ask," he responded quietly. "You have all I can give in love and in faith. I've known your story—not the details, but the significance of it. And when I saw him coming tonight, I knew why. That was why I played. I knew you would get the message."

I was silent, unable to speak in the presence of the throbbing emotions with which his words filled me. Did it mean? But I dared not think.

I shall never forget what he said next.

Pointing to the stars, low and glorious overhead, he went on.

"I had faith in you from the beginning, knowing all. It is impossible not to have faith, darling, with the stars so close as they are here."

"You mean," I whispered, against the lump arising in my throat that seemed about to choke me, "you mean—that after all you know, you'll still—take me—?"

"I mean," Mervin said, gathering me tenderly in his arms, "that I love you and want you to marry me; that together, we're going to find our happiness right here."

"Where we found each other," I added.

And we have. A few days later we were married underneath the same stately poplars.

I had never known such happiness existed as has been mine. And who could appreciate such happiness more completely than one who has known the other side of life so well as I?

Only, I cannot hate Frank, as I've wished sometimes I could. I shall never see him again; however, if he reads this, I want him to understand.

It is impossible to hate, anyway, with a love so deep as I have found, here among clean, growing things.

And when Mervin plays for me in our cottage door in the twilight, then I know afresh each day what exquisite joy it is to love and be loved. And knowing it, I think sometimes of Frank.

And then it is that I hope he is happy, too.

Embers of Hate

[Continued from page 33]

I would have escaped with lighter punishment. For he could have testified I was intoxicated. But Travis learned that immediately following the tragedy he had fled with Belle for an unknown destination. The moment he told me that, I suspected treachery. And, when the detectives who had placed me under arrest testified that word had been telephoned to Police Headquarters where I could be headed off, I was positive that he had deliberately sent me to the station with the intention of informing upon me. That settled my determination for the future, even before sentence was pronounced. I made up my mind that he must pay for the betrayal with his life.

emplary prisoner. I regained my place in the shops. I obtained permission to use the gymnasium. I won back the strength and health which eight years of rebellious prison existence had sapped almost to the breaking point. And I got back six months of my time off and left the prison with a handclasp and the best wishes of the warden.

Once back in New York I immediately located Travis. Through his identification I intended to gain possession of the money on deposit in my name. He did that—and a far greater service. He supplied me with the information for which I would willingly have given half my funds a moment before I crossed his threshold. He told me the hideout of Benson.

And the tide had turned at last. Almost within my grasp were sufficient funds to enable me to hunt down Benson, though his hiding place be at the end of the earth. Never once did I think of turning my back upon the past and, with my unexpected fortune, begin a new life in which he would hold no place. His treachery had been too black. To satisfy his selfish ends he had deliberately set a trap for me; had robbed me of the ten best years of my life. Bitter hate controlled me. I could think of nothing else but to compel him to square his due in full.

I had just one regret—that in a fit of temper I had struck down a guard who had abused me. That act had cost me my good behavior—nearly two years. It had given Benson just that much more time to live. But, with my mind so certain of the ultimate, I reasoned I could afford to wait.

From that moment I became an ex-

A YEAR before, a mutual acquaintance touring the West had met him in Ackerly, a tiny, Montana cow-town. He was living under an alias, "Jed Hardy." He had denied his identity, but the informant knew his man too well to be mistaken. And, though he had not seen her, he had learned that Benson was married; that a woman shared his small ranch beyond the town. I guessed who the woman was. My luck was amazing. It would give me added satisfaction to have Belle Stanton present when I collected my debt.

For nearly four days and as many nights the train had roared its way westward. But to me the journey seemed never ending. I had been keying myself for the imminent meeting with Kent Benson. And with the final act of our drama but just ahead, my nerves were on edge for action. A thousand and one times I revised my

plan of action. If he showed fight it would simplify matters. If he welched—But my thoughts always tangled over some new possibility. On one point only was there no wavering—to kill him, sooner or later.

I knew far ahead when we were approaching our destination. But still there came a tightening in my throat as the train finally came to a staggering halt before a shabby station which bore, in weather-dimmed letters, the town's name.

As I tossed my bags from the train and landed ankle deep in alkali, my straining eyes took in the place at a glance. A sprawling cow-town, baking beneath a noon-high sun. I know a grim smile twisted my lips. Benson's chosen hideout appeared to have but little edge upon my recent prison quarters. Two minutes later a sweat and dust-grimed native was piloting me over a rutted road to Buckman's Tavern, Ackerly's one hotel, in the only automobile in sight.

Then Fate, in one of her ironic moods, dealt me a trump card. As we swung into the main thoroughfare, bordered with a sprinkling of tiny shops, a series of raucous shouts came from a knot of men and boys gathered before what I guessed was the town's hostelry. In a flash we were upon them and stopped. What I saw sent me white hot with rage. A man, his back toward me, gripping firmly the reins of a horse attached to a two-wheeler, was beating the stamping, fear-crazed animal over the head with a cruel quirt.

As I poised for a leap, a slip of a woman with, "Don't, don't, Jed," forced her way through the gesticulating on-lookers. With her puny strength she tried to stay the hand which plied the whip. The man rasped an oath, swung his arm wide, and sent her spinning into the arms of a bystander.

But I only sensed that action. It was something else that I had noted which lashed me to blind fury. For I had caught a glimpse of the face of the one who swung the lash, the brute who had struck a woman. He was the one man in the whole world I wanted to encounter—Kent Benson. The next instant I was upon him, my arm about his neck, bending it back till I heard it crack. Someone caught the horse as it reared for a get-away plunge.

But the surprise attack held Benson inactive for a moment only. With a cry like that of a frightened animal he tore himself from my grasp, whirled, and his hand shot to a weapon belted before his hip. But he never drew. In all my life I never had witnessed such a change. As his red-shot eyes met mine, the liquor madness within him died. A sudden gray swept the color from his cheeks. He recognized me. He guessed why I was there. And the fear which held him rigid and helpless confessed his guilt plainer than words.

THE woman broke the spell. With a flashing, wondering look at me, she grasped Benson by the arm and led him stumbling back to the cart. The loiterers parted as she assisted him to climb the wheel. Then, with the reins held firmly, she spoke to the horse and they vanished in a cloud of dust.

But, crowding out thoughts of the adventure, the fact that I had located Benson was the stunning realization that the woman who had cast her lot with him was not Belle Stanton. As I turned away, my mind again pictured this unknown companion of the man who had become my prey. She was a pretty, little slip of a thing. And, though frightened and ashamed, she fearlessly had faced the brute in an effort to save the horse from his anger. I had seen her for but a matter of moments, yet her frail helplessness had

aroused my sympathy. If I had found that he was living with such a woman, like a man I might have faltered in my purpose. But no. He had struck her in public. Time had not changed his spots. Perhaps, later on, I would settle two scores—one for myself and another for this little woman.

I registered, obtained my room, but explained nothing. However, I had little difficulty in procuring information concerning Benson, known there only under his alias of "Hardy." He had arrived in Ackerly six years back with sufficient funds to purchase a place out a few miles. Connie Harris, who had come from the East in search of better health, was teaching school in the town at the time. She fell in love with the good-looking, easy-going newcomer, and within a few months they were married. All Ackerly attended the wedding and smiled its approval. But not for long. Ranch life was not to Benson's taste. He soon began to neglect the place, drank heavily, and gambled with any who would turn cards with him. Frequently he was in serious debt. Often his creditors threatened to close down on him. But, on these occasions, he would absent himself for a time, always returning with sufficient funds to make a new start. It long had been hinted that he abused as well as neglected his wife. But she made no complaint and the proof was lacking.

RECENTLY he had been drinking more persistently than ever. His outbursts of temper had become more frequent. And the blow which he had struck his wife in public that afternoon was an act which caused little surprise.

The morning following I made the acquaintance of many of the town's leading citizens; Sheriff Coakley, Kelly the banker, and others. With Kelly I deposited several thousand dollars, then purchased a horse and set out toward Benson's ranch. And, as I had anticipated, I encountered him waiting for me when but half way there, seated by the roadside smoking, his horse foraging nearby. We noted each other from a distance, but he made no move until I slipped from my animal and dropped sitting before him, looking straight into his sullen eyes.

"Well, Blain, you found me," he blurted finally with a shrug. "But you didn't find the woman you expected with me, did you?"

"I would rather it had been Belle than the one I saw you strike."

His face crimsoned with anger. "Forget that. I was drunk. Didn't know what I was doing. It won't happen again, though it's no one's business. She's my wife."

I fought down the temptation to throttle him then and there. "What became of Belle?" I queried.

His features twisted themselves into a grimace. "I don't know. She ran away with me because she feared to get mixed up in the shooting. We remained in hiding until my last dollar was gone. Then she disappeared. I've never even heard from her since."

"And it was for such a woman you deserted me, left me to fight a losing battle which landed me behind the bars for ten years?" He had been waiting for my charge against him. I thought I noted a shadow of relief cross his face when I did not accuse him of betraying me. Well, let him believe I hadn't learned the truth. When I chose to speak, the shock would be all the greater.

And, on the instant, his whole manner changed. He fawned and pretended friendliness. He swore that he had not intended to desert me, explaining that for reasons I did not know he feared to run counter to the police. He insisted that when he left New York he felt certain I would be



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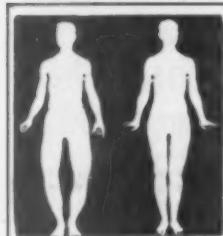


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immediately freed on a self-defense plea. Sickening of his lies, I interrupted. "Well, it's over now. I've served my bit. We can forget it."

"But why did you search me out?" he questioned, the fear and suspicion within him refusing to down.

"Why not?" I countered. "Connor is gone; I don't know where. You were my other pal. Is it strange that I should want to see you again?"

"No, but what will you do out here in this dead man's land?"

"The same as you, Kent," I said slowly. "Exist until I'm ready to make a new start. You used to live with me. Now I'll live with you."

His mouth sagged at my words. "No," he replied, "it wouldn't do. Something might slip. I don't want my wife to learn anything of the past."

"Did you tell her who I was?"

"Yes. Said we were pals in the East, but separated after a quarrel."

"We'll let that stand. Trust me not to talk. But you're going to put me up until I'm ready to leave. I need a home after what I've been through."

"Come clean, Blain," he said angrily; "what's your game?"

I LAUGHED. "You heard what I said.

But there's another reason. I saw you strike a woman, one whom you're not even fit to know, much less hold by a marriage vow. I'm going to see she gets a fair break hereafter. Don't raise a hand to her again while I'm with you or—well, you know what to expect." And thus was our one-sided bargain struck. That night I slept under the roof of Kent Benson.

Connie Hardy's manner toward me, at least for a few weeks, was puzzling. She was too deep for one of my inexperience. I realized she knew her husband feared me. And, though she was friendly, I also sensed that she feared something she could not guess. However, time broke down her barrier of suspicion.

During his absences I did my utmost to comfort and ease the burdens of Connie Hardy. And, so slowly that it was long before I realized the truth, I fell in love with her. At first I tried to deny this to myself, fearing it might swerve me from my purpose to square my accounting with Benson. But it was no use. At last I had found a woman who held my thoughts, night and day, and there was nothing I would not have done rather than bid her a last farewell.

The first real break in the tantalizing situation came one night when Connie was absent at a neighbor's, and I sat alone in the great living-room of Benson's place. I heard the crash of his horse's hoofs as he swung from the roadway. He entered the house drunk and staggering, and hurled himself into a chair opposite me.

"Where's Connie?" he bellowed.

"Out," I shot back.

"Good. Now we can come to a showdown, Mr. Blain Carlton."

"Now you listen." His tone had sunk into a vicious snarl. "I know why you came out here. To get me. But you didn't have the nerve. I'm sick and tired of having you around. I'll give you till morning to pack and leave. If you don't go then—"

"Well?"

"I'll make you." His voice fairly quivered with passion and he leaned closer, shaking a fist before my eyes. The next instant I had him across the table upon his back, tore loose his weapon and hurled it into a corner, then tossed him sprawling against the wall. As he pulled himself to his feet I grasped and held him.

"Now, Benson, I'm going to tell you just where you stand with me. For two years I supported you, gave you practically

every cent you spent and a home. And I stuck to you when others warned me against you. But when my interests conflicted with yours, how did you repay me? You double-crossed me, framed me, betrayed me to the police and sent me to prison for ten years that you might have me out of the way to satisfy your selfish ends. Yes, I came here to kill you, and some day I'm going to do it—when I'm ready."

At my last word he tore himself free, then leaped back, pointing a shaking finger. "When you're ready, yes," he shrieked. "I know what you mean. I stole a woman from you, and now you're trying to square things by stealing my wife. But you shan't have her. Don't think I love her, you fool. I've cursed myself a thousand times for ever tying up with one of her kind. But she's mine—mine, do you hear me? And I'll keep her to spite —"

He ceased speaking, choking on his words, his eyes focused upon the doorway. There stood Connie, a look upon her face I could not fathom.

"How long have you been here?" I gasped.

"I just came. What is the matter? Why are you quarreling?"

Her reply came promptly and with no note of excitement in her tone. But I could not believe but she had heard; at least sufficient to understand.

"It's all over," I said. "Nothing serious. I'm going to bed. Good night." Benson wheeled without a word and slouched into his room. I passed into mine, leaving Connie at the door, looking out into the blackness.

It was on a Monday morning, a week following our quarrel, when Benson, without a word, strapped his blankets and gun to his saddle and rode away. Feeling certain that he had departed upon one of the periodical trips and would not return for days, I headed toward the town, telling Connie I soon would be back. My mission was quickly accomplished. I made out a check for \$1,000, which Kelly cashed. At the first favorable opportunity I intended to give it to Connie and insist that she go back East.

When I returned to the ranch she was so engrossed in her own thoughts and a paper which she now and again read, then crushed in her fingers, that she did not hear me. Finally I stepped to her side and, after brief hesitation, she handed me the missive with, "At last we have reached the end, Jed and I."

ANXIOUSLY I read the scrawl. In short sentences Benson had told her bluntly that he had determined to leave her for all time; that he was going to some place "where the women laughed and danced and sang." He made no reference to me; no suggestion concerning her future. The note closed with, "Don't try to find me. I never want to see you again."

It was not until the following day that we discussed the situation. I wanted to tell her of my feelings, urge her to rid herself of this man who had robbed her of her best years—as he had me—and give me an opportunity to build a new future for us both. But, somehow, it seemed a mockery to speak of love at such a time. And, once again, I reasoned I could wait; this time for happiness, not revenge.

Connie's decision was to return East, to her old home. The only difficulty to her was the means of raising the necessary funds, for she knew the ranch was mortgaged beyond its worth. When I placed before her the money I had drawn for the purpose, she broke down, saying she could not accept it from me. And it required three nights and three days of argument before I persuaded her to take it—as a

loan. Her independence showed up to the best.

Morning broke dismally the day following. A chill wind blew steadily from the west, a thin drizzle fell at intervals. Connie and I ate breakfast in silence, and as the hours wore on, only a few words were exchanged. Obviously, her mind was busy with thoughts of the future, with plans to escape from Kent Benson and the place in which she had known little but unhappiness. I longed to question her, but dared not. I would have followed her anywhere at a nod, but could not even hint that thought then. She might have misunderstood; might have reasoned that I had acted from selfish motives and abandoned her purpose at the last moment. No, irrespective of what might happen in the days to come, I must see that she went far away.

IT was well toward noon, when the rain had ceased and just after I had returned to the house with an armful of kindling, when a sudden pounding of horses' hoofs snapped us from the gloom of our thoughts. I was at the door in a bound, with Connie close behind. Out of a cloud of dust came a horseman, bent low over his saddle, who swung to a halt almost at our feet.

For an instant I doubted my eyes; but a cry from Connie confirmed my doubting guess. The dust-grimed man who dropped from the panting animal, his eyes mad with fear, his shirt stained crimson and an arm hanging limp, was Kent Benson. For an instant he poised swaying, then staggered between us indoors and dropped upon a couch.

His wife was over him in a flash. "Jed, Jed, what has happened?"

"I've been shot . . . Two places . . . My pistol arm's gone . . . A mob's after me—coming fast. In God's name, Blain, help me. Get a gun and hold 'em off. Nothing else will save me."

Connie, already unfastening his shirt, turned wondering eyes upon me.

"But I don't understand," I gasped. "Why did they shoot you?"

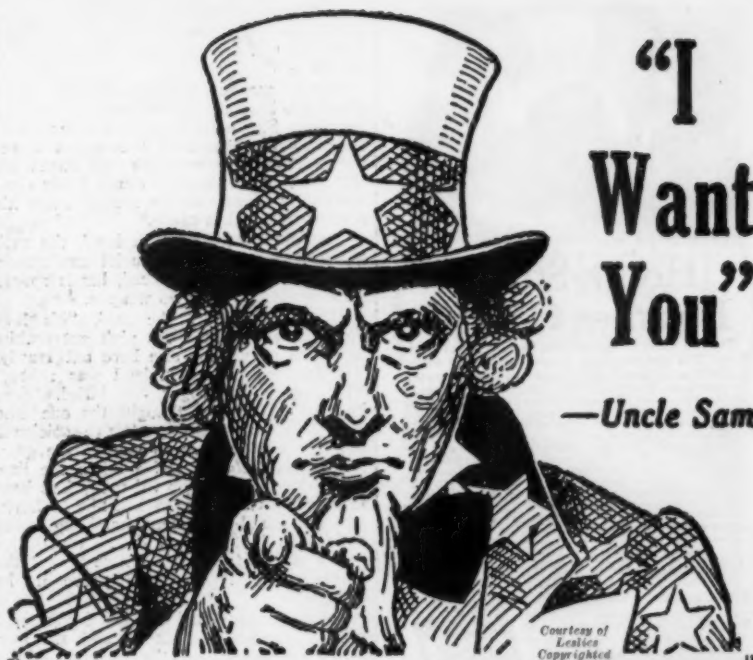
"I was in Berkley, gambling. A mob from across the creek tried to take me. They came for a lynching. Said I helped rob the Overland Tuesday night. They lied, damn 'em. I wasn't there. It was my own money I was spending."

Another flash from Connie's eyes. We guessed the truth. Benson had left home without funds.

For a moment I hesitated. I could reap the vengeance I long had sought and still not raise a hand against him. But uncertainty gripped me only for an instant. If vengeance were to be exacted, I would claim it alone. And in fair fight—when the proper time came. I simply couldn't stand by and see this maimed and helpless wretch strung up without an effort to save him.

ALL right," I cried, but without looking at him. "I'll do my best. Maybe I can hold them back till help comes." Then to Connie. "Get him out of sight and keep out of range yourself no matter what happens."

"Good old Blain." His tongue was getting thick. Only with Connie's help did he hold his place. "I shot my way through the dogs. Thought I'd make a clean getaway. Headed for Ackerly to surrender to the Sheriff. But Coakley was out at his place. Then I saw two of the mob coming. I streaked it, but some bullets caught me. As soon as they get together again they'll come here." He paused. His effort



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to tell his story all but choked him. "Coakley'll come sure Blain. Soon as he hears. Hold 'em off till then, old man, hold 'em off till—"

At that moment a chorus of yells from round the bend told us the mob was all but upon us. Slamming shut the wooden blinds to cover the windows, I snatched a repeater from the arms rack and leaped for the door. As I passed through I saw Connie aiding Benson to his room. Then his door closed with a crash.

At sight of me, gun in hand, the mob halted at a distance. A brief conference, then one of them advanced, hands spread wide to show he had no weapon.

"Listen, stranger," he said, "it's best you act reasonable. We ain't got nothin' agin you or anyone else here but Hardy. Tuesday night the overland was robbed. The express messenger was killed. 'Fore he died he said he thought the one who shot him was Hardy. We've spicined him for a long time as one of the gang that's been robbing trains down the line. Ever since the hold-up till today he's been in hiding. When we tracked him to Berkeley we found he'd been gambling away dollars as if they was dirt. We'll give him a chance to explain where he got the money. But if he can't prove it, he swings."

When the man had finished I countered with a suggestion that he and his men await the arrival of the Sheriff and let the law take its course. But he was obdurate. "Tain't no use," he said. "The messenger's brother is with the boys, and nothin' is going to hold 'em back long. Now will you let us take Hardy peaceably, or must we fight to get him?"

I shook my head. "I don't want to fight you," I answered, "but I won't let you have him if I can prevent it."

For a full minute he stood, measuring me. Then, with a shrug, he swung away. I knew what to expect, and stepped back inside. But my nerve all but left me as I noted Connie at a table loading other guns.

HOWEVER, I was given no time to remonstrate. Before I could fire a shot in a battle which could have resulted only in victory for the dozen or more men outside, a new clamor arose. I realized what it meant. The Sheriff was coming. Motioning to Connie to leave the guns, I again stepped into the open. Coakley and three of his deputies, including Kelly, the town banker, were approaching on foot. The men of the mob followed, sullen at being cheated of their prey.

Slowly they filed into the room. The Sheriff patted Connie on the shoulder, fatherly fashion, and I put aside my weapon at his nod.

"I'm glad you were able to keep the boys quiet till I got here, Carlton," he said. "You're a game man. But now you'll have to step aside for the law. Where's Hardy?"

"What do you want him for?" I parried. "He'll be arrested on a charge of murder and robbery. The boys say you've been told about the hold-up."

"Yes, I know. Maybe he was in that and maybe he wasn't. But one thing's certain. He didn't steal the money he was gambling with from the overland."

"How do you know?" There was just a hint of suspicion in Coakley's tone.

"Because the money was mine." At my words I heard a gasp from Connie, but paid no heed. "I gave that money to Hardy," I continued. "He was to buy cattle for the ranch. If he dropped it gambling, why I lose. But I'm making no charge against him."

For a full minute those in the room held silence, while the Sheriff fixed me with

questioning eyes. "You mean well, Carlton," he said finally, "but what you said won't go."

"It's got to go," I rasped, stepping directly before him. "I say it was my money, \$1,000. I drew it from the bank last Monday. Ask Kelly there. He paid it to me himself." The Sheriff looked toward the banker. His nod signified I had spoken the truth.

Again came a tense pause, the silence being broken only by the deep breathing of those about. From the corner of my eye I saw Connie standing rigid, her face paper white, her lids lowered.

Then Coakley placed an authoritative hand upon my shoulder. "That's all right, Carlton, as far as it goes. But," and he nodded toward the closed door, "I'm going in there to question Hardy. All of you remain here." Another moment and the Sheriff had passed into the room beyond.

I HAD made my fight—and lost. I knew I was in a tight fix, and set myself for the shock which soon must come. But the seconds dragged into long minutes before Coakley reappeared. His face was a study. I might have guessed the truth, but my brain was too numb to think.

Stepping to Connie, he placed a protecting arm about her. Then, "I won't be able to question Hardy, boys," he said, speaking low. "He's—dead."

The last hoof beats of the Sheriff's ponies had long since ceased to echo when the little woman returned to the living room and faced me. Her eyes betrayed traces of recent tears, but there was little tremble in her voice when she spoke.

"Why did you lie about the money, Blain? You guessed, as I did, that he was guilty as they charged."

"Because I wanted to protect you, if I could. Ackerly is your home. Its people are your friends. I hoped to prevent you being branded as a thief before them."

"You've been good to me, Blain, and I appreciate it. But why were you willing to fight to save him, after what he had done to you?"

"Then you overheard our quarrel—that night?"

"Yes, everything." She spoke firmly, and with head held high. "And what I heard killed the last spark of affection I held for him. But you, who had come here to kill him, were ready to give battle for him. Why?"

I COULDN'T answer. I didn't know fully. It was not that I had forgiven him; I hated him to the end. Probably this little woman's influence, my ever increasing love for her, had reawakened my better self more than I had realized. And, when put to the test, I could not disappoint her.

"I understand," she said finally, when I shook my head, helpless for a reply. "And I understand many other things—have for a long time. But in fairness to us both I must make you realize my feelings. I had made a bargain; one which I was pledged to keep. Even when all love was gone I tried to save him from himself. It was my duty. Now everything is changed. Tomorrow, or the next day, I shall go away far—to try to forget the past."

"Will you try to forget everything, everybody?"

"No, Blain, not everybody." She raised a restraining hand as I started to go nearer. "But whatever we would say to each other cannot be said now. I shall return to my old home in the East. If, in a year, you feel the same as tonight, come to me. I shall be waiting."

Fangs

[Continued from page 36]

mixed in my veins. I swung around just in time to behold Carlyon bending over the basket—just in time to see a monster cobra gliding through the curtains toward the room where Billy Travers still waited in the dark.

I did not scream as I got up from the bench and swayed heavily against the piano. I wanted to, but my tongue was a dumb stricken thing in my mouth. Only one sound forced its way through my lips:

"Ah!" I breathed.

"Well, what is it?" he demanded, his lips tautening.

"The cobra! It—it's gone—in there," I found myself saying.

"Indeed!" was Carlyon's response. Now his face was flushed, not gray, as it had been a few moments before. I noticed this in spite of my panic. It meant one thing to me. The fever was in his blood. It sometimes acted that way. Then hysteria burned in my own blood.

"My God! It's in the passage. Stop it!" I screamed.

"Don't worry; it cannot escape. Chand will catch it presently."

"No—no! My God! It will be too late!"

"Too late? Why, my dear girl! Be sensible. You speak as if it could harm somebody," he said.

"Yes—I—that is—oh, Carlyon, for heaven's sake, fetch it back, fetch it back."

"Very well, dear; you stay here and I will get Chand to come and play his flute."

I knew that I was beaten. Carlyon had known the truth from the start. Oh, will I ever forget those next few seconds, during which I begged my husband to go into the passageway after the cobra? His answer stung me like a lash.

"You expect me to risk my life for his. I am only your husband, but I draw the line at that—"

"Carlyon, what ever are you saying? I told you—"

"You told me a lie—a lie with the Judas stain upon it—"

A muffled shriek from the boudoir split his sentence in two. Then came a crash . . . and the sounds of struggle, unequal struggle. I fell prone upon the floor.

"Ah! There is nothing in there now, but that *t-h-i-n-g*," he cried, then clapped his hands. Chand glided into the room . . . "My horse and things, Chand. I'm going back to the camp."

"Yes, Sahib," I heard the Hindoo answer. Then I struggled to my feet. My husband strode over, his face more fever-flushed than ever. The sound of scuffling and muffled screams still came from the tea-room, but I heard his last cutting words:

"Good-by," he said, and hurried out of the room.

SOMEHOW I staggered over to the window. I watched him, as a woman watches something fine and strong that she has driven out of her own life by her own hands. He mounted his horse, and galloped away. I looked up—

"My God! The full moon through glass, blood-red! Ah! It—it was a curse. It was," I wailed, turning away from the crimson vision. Now I was to see blood before dawn. Yes, it had been written. I would! Strange strength and courage came to me. I started for the passageway. I was going down into the boudoir of death . . . or worse. As I pulled the curtains back, Chand called shrilly:

"Mem Sahib—where do you go?"

"Back there—to the man—"

"No, Mem Sahib, please no go. Cobra

there. Chand get him. There on piano! Quick! I play flute," he said, half-shoving me to the top of the piano. Then his flute flew to his brown lips, and he blew the music that charmed snakes.

It was a horrible sight to see that cobra's full blown head snap and twitch at the curtains . . . then see the sinuous body writhe into full view. A fanatic light, like that in Chand's eyes, gleamed in those of the cobra. But the music from the Hindoo's flute charged the gleam with hypnotic happiness instead of anger. The reptile almost danced its way across the floor and through the opening which led to the veranda. When its tail zipped through the curtained aperture, I sprang from the piano top and ran into the room where Billy Travers lay, a victim of the snake.

IT was dim and dark in the boudoir: I stumbled across the boy's inert form, then fell upon my knees beside him.

"Billy! Oh, my God! He must be dead," I gasped, my hands suddenly becoming wet. Realizing I could do nothing in the dark, I staggered out for a candle. By the light in the other room I saw my hands were stained red—red with Billy Travers' blood! Somehow, I managed to find my way back to Billy's side.

For three of the longest hours of my life I had been sitting by Lieutenant Travers' cot in the barrack's hospital, waiting for the dread sign that cobra poison was taking its final toll. The doctors had found him badly bitten, and suffering from shock. But they were waiting for the worst to come at dawn . . . waiting for the poison to run harder than it seemed to be doing.

Poor Billy had moaned a few times during all these dragging hours, but full consciousness had never returned to him. Now, with death stalking him in the lifting light outside the ward, he lay a victim of—of my own fangs, I thought.

"There!" whispered a surgeon, half under his breath. My eyes reeled after his pointing finger; Billy was twitching, as if in agony. "The poison is beginning to run hard . . ."

Before we knew it, Billy Travers raised himself halfway up in bed. His eyes blazed at me. His right arm went out as if to strike me.

"You—Norah—you're to blame—"

"Billy," I implored, looking at the surgeon helplessly. He immediately went out of the room. I turned to the boy. But he was in the grip of delirium.

"I didn't want to stay. God knows I'd have gone if it hadn't been for your scheming. I'm being a cad, I guess. What pain in my breast! Ah! Knives—a Mahratta dagger, too! Damn you, Norah. I was done back there in Surrey . . . Fever . . . It's in my blood. Don't play that music again. My God! Go back to Carlyon; he's a prince. Take those fangs out of me—"

The doctor returned with a needle. He slipped behind fright-maddened Billy. He caught his flourishing arm . . . In another few seconds the boy fell backwards, inert under morphine.

We waited there at the bedside, the doctor and I, waited for the dawn and further signs of the poison's triumph. The dawn flamed in the sky, streaking the East with ribbons of saffron and crimson, melting away the soft night shadows. The stars went out one by one. The moon turned yellow, then white, then faded altogether. Soon the sun climbed higher

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than the hills. The terrific heat once more! Still the poison gave no signs.

It was dazzling daylight when Chand Singh came into the room. His eyes seemed glued on the motionless Billy. The native shook his head after a while, and turned to me:

"He no die. Sahib fanged cobra. No poison to kill. Just hurt man. Be all right soon. No poison," he calmly finished.

"The cobra was fanged?" I cried.

"Yes, Mem Sahib."
I ran to the bedside and kissed Billy Travers' white, drawn young face. Thank God! He would not die! At least there would be no stain of Cain on my soul! I cried and laughed at this blessed knowledge. It was the doctor who led me out of the room into the sparkling sun glow of another Indian day.

UPON the threshold of my own bungalow I paused. Up until this moment I had not dared plan another minute of life. But now, with the knowledge of the empty bungalow, and Carlyon gone back to the jungle with fever in his body, and hatred of me in his heart, I made my decision for the future.

"No matter what's happened, my place is with him, even if he tries to drive me away. I've got to go to him; I've got to make him believe that I have not dishonored his name. He must know the truth about Billy, and last night," I murmured inwardly, shivering at the remembrance of the things Billy had cried out against me in his delirium.

No, I would always think of Billy where my heart love was concerned. I could never really love Carlyon. But he was my husband! My duty was with him! He was nearing the jungle again. It did not matter that I feared the jungle as a child fears the unknown dark. I put away all fear in my decision.

"Chand," I said, turning to the brown man, "saddle my horse, yours, and two for two more servants. We are going after the Sahib—"

"Ah, Mem Sahib," cried the Hindoo, falling on his knees as if in thanksgiving, "I go get horses quick."

"You will get everything we shall need for a stay in the jungle, Chand. For I cannot go back into the bungalow," I commanded.

Chand Singh went into the house at a faster pace than I had ever seen him move. The minutes dragged by. I waited, afraid to let myself think. At last, Chand, servants, and horses came to the front. I took the little pearl-handled revolver Chand offered me, and let him swing me into the saddle.

The trail was soon winding before us, a brown, sun-baked ribbon of hoof-marked dirt—the trail that must be traveled to find George Carlyon.

All that morning we rode, on and on into the hill country, hurdling the heightening hills under a sun that made me feel fires burning above my throbbing temples. Along the route the grass grew brown and white, parched and scorched by summer heat. Here and there broken walls cast shadows, and it was in this sort of shade that we rested when the sun reached mid-sky.

The horses were spent, poor beasts, but, having no mercy on my own self then, I could not muster any sympathy for the animals. I was driving myself on the journey of reparation—on my mission of duty. The horses, too, would have to be driven. Carlyon must be caught up with, or found at the camp. In every straggling village we passed, the news of him had always been the same. Chand had brought the latest to me just an hour before our

halt in the shade of a temple wall.

"Sahib ride through village here long time ago. Before sun get hot. Sahib ride like wind. Servants way behind him. Can't keep close to Sahib," he had declared in his calm way.

At the moment of Chand's telling me this, I had figured from the other bits of news concerning my husband that he had gained almost two hours on us since our start. George was a tireless rider. He could wear horses out. But, with fever burning him up, would not this last mad ride wear him out?

Again I asked myself this question. I shuddered at the answer which an inner voice seemed so ready to give. The voice said that he would die on the way, and that I would be to blame for his death. It mocked me, crying out that he was riding at a Death pace because he was running away from the terrible woman he believed me to be.

My hour in the shade turned into torment instead of rest. Although the first jolt from my mount sent pains through my whole body, I was glad to be off again on the trail . . . for the pain of riding somewhat numbed the agony of my thoughts.

About three o'clock we passed through a village. Chand said it was one of the last of its kind and size along the trail:

"Hills grow higher . . . deeper, Mem Sahib. I get more natives now. Need men for camp watch. Tigers, leopards, plenty more. Jungle danger for Mem Sahib now—"

"But, Chand," I cut in, fearful at his words, for the fear of the jungle was deep in my heart, "do not talk about those things to me. Make your arrangements later. Find out about the Sahib . . . Have they seen him? He has been through here?"

"Mem Sahib, Sahib ride through here long time ago. He no stop for more men. Him still ride like wind!" he answered in his calm way.

"Hurry then. We must carry on."

When we started anew, ten more brown men rode in our cavalcade. They did not all carry guns. Chand said they did not all own guns. Some rode with their spears only, and their daggers at their waists. I shut my eyes upon them time and time again; I did not want to be reminded of the night to come that would be filled with the yells of these turbaned brown men, scaring away the jungle beasts.

DAYLIGHT died at last upon the trail when the circling hills swallowed the cruel sun. We did not dare press on into the gathering shadows. Camp must be made! Chand put the natives to work arranging a tent for me and getting the fires ready which would be a protection against the jungle creatures. While they worked I sat upon a camp chair and watched, my thoughts filling with the words Lawrence Hope had written under the title of *Jungle Fear*. As each stanza ran through my mind, it seemed as if Hope must have known my own fear of the tangled dark when he penned them. As I write now of that long ago night in India, the poet's words seem best descriptive of what I felt, waiting for my camp to be made:

"When sunset lights are burning low,
While tents are pitched and camp-fires glow,
Steals o'er us, ere the stars appear,
The furtive sense of *Jungle Fear*."

For when the dusk is falling fast,
Still, as throughout the Ages past,
The stealthy beasts of prey arise
And prow around with hungry eyes.

Though safe beside the fire I sit,
And stretch contented hands to it,
Though all the cheerful camping ground,

With men and arms so close around,
I feel the jungle very near
And shiver with instinctive fear.
For in some hidden cells of me
Stirs the ancestral memory
Of times when from the beasts of prey
At this same hour men slunk away
To seek their caves, and thrilled to hear
The red-eyed panthers lurking near.
Long centuries have since passed by
But still these instincts will not die.

And even men in cities pent,
Who never slept beneath a tent,
Have said that they at twilight feel
The same strange fear across them steal.

Hid in our beings, dim and deep,
The terror of past perils sleep,
A heritage obscure and vast
From Man's unfathomable past.

Each twilight, when the sun burns down,
In desert waste, or crowded town,
When shadows fall and night draws near
The dusk brings back the Jungle Fear."

And so did the Jungle Fear invade my soul as the shadows deepened in hills, and drifted wraith-like through the brooding trees. For the first time since my decision to go after my husband, I was on the verge of losing nerve. The voice of fear seemed to overawe the voice of conscience that had been sounding in my heart for hours. I was only a woman, alone with a band of barbaric mystics, loitering in the lairs of tigers, leopards, and the other feline beasts of the night.

Chand was my only hope. And, sitting there on the camp chair, watching him direct his men, I felt certain that Chand could be counted upon, only because of the Hindoo love he bore his white master, my husband. . . . At last the task was done, and the camp fires reddened, throwing dancing lights into the woods that were like purple patches in the dark. The pungent smoke, spiraling skywards like tremulous fingers, traced imaginary clouds against the star-grained skies.

Chand brought me food and wine. I nibbled at the food and sipped a cup of wine. The natives circled the fires, and ate and talked, their voices reaching me like the hum of a distant sea. Later, the humming was smothered beneath the cries of jungle cats. Then began the screeching and yelling of the men on guard. At first I put my fingers in my ears. But the sounds persisted anyhow.

ALONE in my tent I thought I would go mad. A dumb sort of delirium came over me. It was the delirium of a caged-up jungle fear, and the delirium of memories, fresh, poignant, and agonizing—memories of Carlyon's discovery; of the cobra-bitten Billy, who had cursed me from his hospital bed. Unable to remain in the tent any longer, I went out and sought Chand. It would be better to talk with him than think by myself. Perhaps, I said inwardly, talking with him will give me the courage to carry on.

"Chand, how far do you think we are from your master's camp?" I began.

His reply was immediate. We would strike Carlyon's camp next day before sunset, continuing at our first day's pace.

"Chand Singh know this for sure," he said in a mystifying manner, as if his knowledge had come from some strange but certain source. Curious, I questioned him on this point.

"Mem Sahib be mad—call me dog of black slave, if I tell—"

"No, I will not be angry, Chand," I said, knowing I was at his mercy now.

"I send runners to get the Sahib when white man come first to see Mem Sahib. I tell Mem Sahib once I love her—but I love

the Sahib more. Chand no want man coming to house but Sahib. Runners find the Sahib. They take one day and one half day on trail. We take little more," he ended, his eyes on the fire.

A feeling of uncanniness stole over me. I felt as if I were in the presence of the supernatural. So—Chand Singh with his Hindoo's cunning had sensed an enemy of his master's in the presence of Billy Travers. He had sent for Carlyon . . . had brought him back from camp!

"Mem Sahib look through glass at blood-red moon like Zada—"

"How do you know I did, Chand?" I demanded.

CHAND SINGH behind curtains—see Mem Sahib look through glass. She laugh—Chand know something terrible happen quick—"

"I am going to—sleep, now, Chand. Good night." I told him, no longer wishing to be near him. The native had suddenly become like an evil spell to me. At my rising, he came forward, and clutched the hem of my skirt.

"Mem Sahib—Mem Sahib, no be angry. I—I know the Sahib love you very much. Him hurt here," he said, tapping his breast, "because Mem Sahib no love him much. Tomorrow you make the Sahib happy—you go to him—"

"All right, Chand, tomorrow," I answered, swallowing a lump that had gathered in my throat.

Sleep only came in fitful starts and jerks. Every time I awakened, uncanny intuition warned me that Chand Singh was sitting outside my tent, on guard. He was going to protect me, himself, so that he could bring me to the Sahib's side. . . . "But, will Carlyon thank Chand for bringing me to him—tomorrow? I wonder? Will he wish Chand Singh had not guarded me well? Will he wish the jungle, or the sun, had claimed me?"

These were the questions that intruded my waking and sleeping hours.

Riding the next day was fierce, brutal pain.

Every movement of my horse made a bruise of my whole body. But we pressed on. Anything was better than the miserable agony of thinking. There could be no peace for me until I found George Carlyon and confessed all in the hopes of forgiveness.

I would not order a stop for lunch. The men watered the horses about two o'clock, then we were in the saddle again. The God-sent cool of the hills had just begun to temper the late afternoon air when there was a soft exclamation from Chand, riding at my side.

"What is it, Chand?"

"The camp—one mile more, Mem Sahib," he replied, lapsing back into the lazy calm of his native way.

My heart began to drum against my breast! Another mile!—Then what? What drama would next unfold in my life? Carlyon! Would he be at the end of the trail? And if so, what would be his answer to my coming? Of course, he would have every right to ignore me—to refuse a word with me. God in heaven! Whatever would my husband do?

White tents at the end of the far-flung, winding trail!

I strained forward, a feel of suffocation assailing me in the vast open of India. I wondered then if breath would last until a first sight of Carlyon.

Natives, and two white men, came forward curiously, at our approach. I recognized Edmund Whepple, a young barrister, practicing in India. He was almost bowled over at my appearance.

"Mrs. Carlyon!" he cried.

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"Carlyon? He returned?" I faltered.
Silence, insidiously foreboding, fell be-
tween us at my question. Young Whepple
seemed to fall back, then rally somewhat
and come towards me, as if struggling to
regain lost speech. Instinctively I sensed
something was wrong.

"Please," he began, fidgeting on his feet,
and gesturing badly with his hands, "come
down and let me fix you something—er—
refreshing."

"But, Carlyon?" I almost screamed.

"He—that is to say, it's rather a long
story. Perhaps the thing to do is re-
freshment first—"

"No—I must know now. The worst,
whatever it may be. Please tell me, Mr.
Whepple."

"Carlyon disappeared quite without ex-
planation four days ago. We figured he'd
dashed off some place to fetch back a
royal tiger or so. He makes camp this
morning at daybreak. All done up—fagged
out—"

"Fever—fever—did he show fever?"

"Eh? Fever? Well, yes, poor chap,
he did seem a bit feverish. He said
nothing about his experiences. Turned in
for sleep. When we got up for morning
mess, by gad! Carlyon was—"

"Dead!" I interposed, feeling sure of
tragedy.

AGAIN the young lawyer seem to reel
from my words. This confirmed my
worst suspicion. I would have fainted there
on the spot if Whepple had not caught me,
crying out at the same moment that Car-
lyon was not dead.

"God forbid, not dead, Mrs. Carlyon.
No—he was gone from his bunk—
Gone again—and feverish just like Ridge-
well got—"

"Oh, thank Heavens!" I moaned. "Then
he's in the jungle, some place, dead or
alive."

"I'm afraid that's it," returned the man,
leading me toward a tent.

Forcing a drink of brandy down my
throat, he said that the other men in com-
pany with natives had taken up the search
at noon, after he and his party returned
for lunch.

"We are going out tonight again, as
soon as the others return—"

"When you go again, I go with you," I
stated, conquering my jungle fears in a
moment of most complete exhaustion—
exhaustion that forced unnatural sleep
upon me for the next two hours.

Whepple and the others had failed to
keep me from accompanying them on the
searching party. Having conquered my
fear of the woods and the beasts, nothing
could have possibly restrained me. I
prayed that I might find the man whom I
had sent into a lair of Death, as we
plunged deeper and deeper into the tangled
gloom. Splitting the party into fours, I
found myself with Whepple, Chand, and
another native. It was Whepple who,
hearing a crackling sort of crash ahead,
stopped, exclaiming softly:

"We've roused a leopard. Too light a
sound for tiger. Panthers move faster.
Yes, a leopard!"

For a moment, my fear returned a
thousandfold. Panic throttled my heart.
I hung back. It was only the touch of
Whepple's hand on my arm that sent me
on again. . . . The crackling of the jungle
became a lesser sound. Whepple said the
leopard was bearing away from us—

"But, after the way of a jungle cat,
she'll circle us. We must be on guard
from now on, more than ever," he said.

The words had barely left his lips when
a series of snarls and feline cries reached
us from ahead.

"She's met trouble—panther in the way.

Listen! Hear that hissing? Panther, sure
as fate," Whepple informed me.

The moments we waited listening to
the sounds of jungle battle were terrible.
I shudder now as I remember them. But
at last they died away, smothered by
death that had come, most likely, to one
of the animals. . . . We pressed on, later
reaching a sort of clearing. There it
was that Whepple said we must divide
again, and go in different directions by
twos. He took the left with his man.
Chand and I went to the right.

The jungle scratched me, had wore out
what little remaining strength I had. After
an hour Chand made me stop in another
slight clearing.

"Mem Sahib stay here few minutes.
Chand go look close by," he commanded,
vanishing in the thick dark. I waited,
clutching my little pistol, half-certain I
would not have the nerve to use it if needs
be. It seemed Chand had been gone for
hours when a faint moany sound reached
me, as if issuing from the woods to my
right. At first I was fearfully certain I
had heard an animal, but the moans became
human things, as I listened. I fought with
myself for the courage to investigate,
dominated by a sense that something
tremendous was impending. The courage
came. I faltered off into the brooding
dark.

I realized it was Carlyon before I
stumbled over him. The moans had be-
come more coherent sounds.

"Carlyon, my dear," I sobbed, going
down beside him.

His answer was only another moan—a
sound weakened by the fever that flamed
in his temples. I pressed my canteen of
water to his lips. He gulped eagerly, as
if he had been dry for years. All the
time I held the tin to his lips, Carlyon's
fingers kept straying feebly over mine, as
if he could not understand my hands. I
suppose, fever-crazed, he thought I was
a native, or one of his companions. He
could not understand my woman's hands.

When I took the canteen away, his
moans became words. I tried to hush
him—but he went on.

"She—she was always a good woman.
No, she wouldn't! Not a lie on the
crucifix. No—not that! Norah—
Norah, where are you? Tell me it isn't
true. Tell me there was nothing wrong
between you and—and—I'm burning—"

"My husband!" I cried, "I am here . . .
Your Norah! No—I didn't swear a lie
on your crucifix. There was nothing
wrong, Carlyon . . . George . . . Oh, God!
Make him understand me—"

HE did not understand that I was there.
But he understood that somebody had
answered his pleas, and this seemed to
soothe him. He lay quiet for a few
moments. It was during those few silent
seconds that a foreboding sound filled my
ears . . .

It was a sound of stealth; a sound of
strange silence for intervening seconds.
Then stealth again . . . then a crackling
. . . a pause . . . again the stealth of
padded feline feet. Suddenly my nostrils
dilated as they had before at the scent of
a wild thing. This time the scent was
stronger, more pungent than before. It
was a thing that seeped down into my
very soul, strangling my power to cry out
for help.

A crash in the jungle—and green eyes
flashed at me. Ice was in my heart and
limbs. Silhouetted against the jungle,
crouched a huge tiger—a king of his kind.
His tail zipped through the air like a whip
as his shoulders bunched about his glorious
animal head. My hour and Carlyon's
hour of doom had come to us together, I
thought.

[Turn to page 112]



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Fangs

[Continued from page 110]

I dared switch my terrified glance from the beast to my husband. I wanted one last look at the man I had hurt so much. Numbed by the fever, he still lay in semistupor beside me. His eyes were closed to the threatening death!

A snarl warned me of the tiger's cautious approach. I turned to face the beast, determined that I should protect Carlyon to the bitter end. I drew my pistol; I pulled the trigger. There was a snapping sound, but no report. The gun had jammed!

The tiger drew back as if to spring. At last, speech sundered my lips. My cry startled Carlyon. He moved, sniffing the air. In a last burst of strength, he shoved me from the path of the beast. The next thing I knew a long bore rifle spat fire into the night. There were roars and snarls of pain in front of me...

Chand was pouring water on me when my eyes opened again. Dazedly, I looked

about in the dark. Carlyon's head was pillowed in my lap. He seemed asleep, breathing very softly. I looked ahead. A great tiger lay sprawled on the ground. My eyes went back to Chand. He was kneeling away from me now, having stopped bathing my forehead.

AH! Mem Sahib and the Sahib together—Chand know Sahib happy! Mem Sahib happy! Chand, him happy, too!" he said, bowing before me.

A thousand things passed through my mind and heart in that moment. I remembered Bill Travers—the blood-red moon—the Cobra—. Then I forgot them all in the knowledge that never again would Carlyon's happiness be endangered if he still wanted to find my respect and devotion. And that is my story of my life, my love, and India, and the jungle.

[THE END]



Merely the Door-Mat

[Continued from page 29]

now did lend a hand, and I don't know what we would have done if they hadn't. But that's all they did—they would lend a hand; they would never get into the harness and under the load. But now also, with all of them growing up, they were eating more food, wearing more clothes, darning more clothes, making more sewing, more dish-washing—everything! And perhaps there wasn't one big family wash each week! And ironing enough to keep a laundry busy. We never had enough money. When Father became sheriff, after having been a deputy for years, he owed so much money that we were still pinched. I found that I had to wash twice a week, for it could not all be done in one day. And when I wasn't washing I was ironing. Some of the others helped from time to time at the ironing, but it seemed to me that I was washing and ironing all the time. Cooking and dish-washing and scrubbing were just sandwiched in. I had now long since lost any interest or pride or satisfaction in the doing of these things, such as I started with as a little girl. But they had to be done. I had now learned to sew pretty well, and while Mother spent most of her time at mending and sewing, there was always such an accumulation of it beyond what she was able to do that it took up any slack in my time.

HOWEVER, as time went on I had the satisfaction of seeing my brothers and sisters graduate. I was glad of that, at least, and proud of them, though I will confess that there were moments of bitterness in feeling that I could not have enjoyed the same privilege. At one time I had thought that when they graduated they might take hold of affairs at home and give me a chance to go back to school, but it naturally did not work out that way. It never does. They found it more expedient to get jobs for themselves, though of course they mostly boarded at home. Which left the situation unchanged so far as I was concerned. But the family needed the extra money they earned, so there was nothing I could say about it. In fact, I was glad they were working. And one day it proved to be a lucky thing for us that they were.

There came a time when grim tragedy stalked into our home. Father was brought home on a stretcher, dead, following a battle with a gang of burglars. The

post office had been robbed the night before, an alarm had been given, and Father had gone with others to hunt these men down. Father discovered the bandits, where their automobile had broken down; he had been shot full of holes. The shock almost killed Mother. I know I was more or less paralyzed for weeks, like living in a dream.

However, in time we picked up the threads of life, where they had been torn, as people always do, and bravely went on our way. The others worked, and I stayed at home with Mother. In time Mother had an operation that almost corrected her trouble, but shortly after that a peculiar paralysis set in, so that she was worse off than before.

As time went on, the others had their sweethearts, the boys went to the city to work, and one by one the girls got married, setting up homes of their own. I stayed with Mother, as expected. Even the boys got married.

Things were now considerably changed. We no longer had all that family life around us. The work at home, just for us two, was simplified. But also, as the others acquired husbands and wives and homes of their own, we were deprived of their contributions to the family funds. So by the time I was left with Mother, I myself was working. I had to contrive to find work that I could do at home. I finally took a convenient little place of three rooms, just around the corner from the main street of the town, and hung out a sign as "Public Stenographer." I had learned a little shorthand from one of my sisters, and had practiced upon a second-hand typewriter that the others had used years before. I got a business start by getting some work from the law firm to which the District Attorney belonged, and especially through a young lawyer friend connected there. I bought a new typewriter, on time payments, and from then on I mixed this professional work with caring for Mother, cooking, and domesticity in general.

AND now there developed my big problem. For Jim—the young lawyer I just spoke of—kept coming to see me, bringing me as much of the work of his firm as he could. They offered me a position in their office, but I could not leave Mother, and since I was right around the

corner I could still do a lot of work for them. Anyway, Jim not only came to bring me work during business hours, but he began bringing it in the evening, until I knew that it was just an excuse for calling to see me. And then he would stop and visit.

Sometimes, when Mother was quite comfortable, we would take short walks. Jim was a fine, manly fellow, sincere, hard-working and looking forward to a good future. But of course I saw him only as a friend. It was not for me to think of anything more than that. Anyway, Jim was in the same position as I. He was supporting and taking care of his own mother. Perhaps I should say that he was supporting her and she was taking care of him. Anyway, she was not incapacitated, like my mother, and she kept house for him. So there he was. We were two of a kind.

One evening in the course of a walk we had gone across one or two fields and had to climb a fence. He vaulted over first and then helped me. I stopped for a moment and sat perched on the fence, feeling like a school girl, in a happy mood.

"How's the weather up there?" he said.

"Oh, I like it, Jim. The moonlight is much brighter up here."

"Well, that's nice," he said, "but it's awfully lonesome down here, all alone. Come down off your perch."

He held up his hands to mine to help me down. And then, on a sudden impulse, instead of helping me down that way, he picked me up in his strong arms, as he would a child, to lift me down. He held me for a moment. I was happy, but I did not think it was quite proper, and I began to kick my heels a little, and told him to put me down. And then, still holding me, he kissed me tenderly and lovingly, and put me down.

For a moment neither of us spoke. Somehow, that kiss seemed to make everything different. I did not know what to say. I was glad, and yet I felt that he should not have done it.

"Why did you do that?" I said, as we started to walk.

"Why, I don't know." And then I could see that he was embarrassed about it. And then he said, "I beg your pardon, Georgia."

"Oh, that's all right, Jim," I said, "but—don't you think it would have been better if we had—well, if we had remained just friends?"

"I know it," he said, very shy, "but somehow, it isn't like that any more."

"Why isn't it? Why can't it be?"

"Well, it just isn't, that's all. I didn't mean to—to do that. It just happened."

"It shouldn't have happened," I said.

"Maybe not, but it did. It was bound to happen. Anyway, so far as my feelings are concerned."

THEN we walked on a ways without speaking. Finally I said, "Don't you think that we had better not see each other so much? Don't you think that we had better not go walking together, Jim?"

"No, I don't. Can't you see, Georgia, that you are all I've got—except my mother? That I look forward to seeing you every day? I don't know what I'd do, now, if I didn't see you."

"Well, but don't you see—" I started to say.

"Oh, I know what you mean," he said. "I'll promise not to do it again. But it isn't the same as our being only friends, on my side, any more. I'll promise not to—er—to kiss you again. Maybe our friendship doesn't mean so much—on your side?"

And then on an impulse I told him the truth. I can't yet see why I shouldn't say just how I felt. What was the use of pretending that I didn't care?

"Yes, Jim," I said. "It does mean a lot

to me, too; it means everything to me.

"Thank you—for saying that," he said, and he took hold of my hand and squeezed it. And the next moment he had me in his arms and he kissed me again. And the funny part of it was that—on top of what I had just been saying to him—I myself threw my arms around his neck and kissed him, too. I kissed him with all my heart and soul. And then I pushed him away.

"There," he said, "you see, it isn't the same as it used to be. It can never be the same again."

We walked along, hand in hand, thinking. Suddenly I let go his hand, and said, desperately, "Don't you see, Jim, how useless, how foolish it is? Don't you see?"

"I know what you mean," he said. "You're thinking of your mother."

"Yes, my mother—and your mother."

"I know," he said. And then we talked it all over quite frankly. He had his mother. I had my mother. Each of us obviously had his own duty, and marriage was out of the question. But by this time we were nearly back to my place, and I could not leave Mother alone any longer. Jim said we would talk it over some more the next evening. And we surely did a lot of thinking in the interval.

THE next evening we walked out, and I would not let him take my hand. We just talked. He was hopeful. He thought perhaps the two mothers might be good enough friends so that we could be married and have them both live with us. That was just like a man! I could see right away that it would not do—no more than once in a thousand cases. For it was not a mere matter of a roof and bread and butter. The thing we were concerned about was the happiness of our mothers. My own had been depending upon me so long, and she was fairly happy now, considering her affliction, and so I could not possibly change the situation, and I said so. There was nothing against his own mother, but you know that old people sometimes get very sensitive; they get queer ideas about their place in life. If I gave my first thought and care to a husband, and shared my attention with another acquired mother, my own mother would not be happy. And I said to Jim that since my mother was almost helpless, his mother might sometimes find herself in a position to wait on her, and she would not be happy in doing that.

"No, Jim," I said, "One mother-in-law in any home is sometimes enough to make trouble. To put two mothers-in-law together—why, it just wouldn't do."

Jim was discouraged now, and said we were out of luck. But when I suggested that we try to forget and not see each other any more, he almost flared up. He said he couldn't forget, that I was his and he was mine, whether we could get married now or not, and that the way he felt about it, he would wait for me until he was a hundred years old. He said he didn't mean that we should wait until our mothers would die, for he hoped that they never would. But he said he knew that conditions sometimes changed, for a lot of different reasons, and usually for some reason that one did not expect, and probably this situation would change in some other way. And he asked me if I would wait, and I told him that I would wait for him until I was two hundred years old. And we both laughed. And I let him kiss me, just once, on that promise.

But of course that did not settle the problem, although it did leave us with an understanding. From then on we kept company steadily, when work permitted. Sometimes he went on trips, and I just lived in the expectation of his return. Three or four years passed, and all that

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For Children Also

time we kept facing this problem.

Now, what would you have done in a case like that? You may think it was an easy matter to decide, just by cutting loose and getting married, but I'll tell you it was pretty hard to know what to do. And yet, as the years went by, it began to be clear that the situation was due entirely to the fact that my brothers and sisters had shirked their share of the responsibility in the care of my mother. This was first pointed out to me by a girl friend, but in my loyalty to the family I would not see it that way. And yet I knew that what she said was true. I don't mean to blame them for it now. I had really brought it on myself, for the most part, by the position I had taken from their earliest childhood, in making myself the family goat, a free valet to all of them. And now as I studied their attitude more closely when they called to see Mother and me, I saw clearly more definite signs of this attitude. They just took it for granted that I would make the telephone calls, and do this and that—anything that was to be done, instead of doing it themselves.

My girl friend saw this and mentioned it. Also, she said that if I were to die, my mother would somehow be taken care of. And I knew that was true. One day I told Jim what my friend had said. He said that he had seen it that way all the time, but that it would not do for him to say what seemed like anything against my folks. About this time Florence, my oldest sister, and her husband had just built themselves a new house, quite large and comfortable, although they had no children. Jim suggested that there was no reason in the world why they could not give Mother a nice home.

"Oh, but Mother would not be so happy there. She feels that her home is with me," I said.

"Georgia," said Jim, "don't you see that it is a matter of your choosing between your mother and me?"

"Well, not just exactly that," I said. "Yes, just that. Doesn't your own happiness mean anything? Doesn't my happiness mean anything?"

I KNEW that all he said was true. But I said, "Duty, Jim."

"How about your duty to yourself?" That hit the nail on the head. Here was I, knowing that marriage and motherhood represented my whole life destiny. I longed for a real home. That little place with my mother was not a home in the sense that I wanted one. I loved babies. The fact that I had taken such care of my brothers and sisters, and also the fact that I was so devoted to my mother, showed that I had in me the making of a good mother.

Yet here I was, stifling every womanly instinct. "Purely for a bit of sentiment," Jim had said, analyzing it.

Here was I, saying to my rightful future husband, "You have got to stand aside just because I have selfish brothers and sisters who are shirking their share of my load."

And here was I, saying to my unborn children, "No, there is no place in the world for you, just because this dear old lady, who happens to be your grandmother, loves me so much that she will not let me live my own life or permit me to give life to you!"

That was the situation. It was more or less foggy at first, but gradually it became so clear that I could not avoid it. It kept coming up in my thoughts. I found myself brooding over it. I began to be a trifle more bitter over it, and it is not natural for me to be bitter. But it must have got under my skin pretty deep, for this undercurrent of feeling was responsible for an unexpected outbreak one day when some of the folks were at our little

place to celebrate Mother's birthday.

Jim and I had been talking about it the evening before. He was beginning to be impatient. Of course the way he looked at it, his mother could live with us if my mother could somehow be otherwise taken care of. I was a little peevish, too, and I could not see why his mother should be favored; I did not quite like his taking it for granted that my mother should live some other place. And yet there was nothing else that his mother could do, and in that way he was justified. However, he was urging me to come to a decision, and that meant, to his decision. He said, "Let's just go and get married, because you have just as much right to get married as they had—of course you have—and then see what they can do about it."

"Well, it was right on top of this talk with Jim that something came up at Mother's little family birthday party that riled me. My sister Cora, who now had two small children, was planning a nice motor trip of about a month through Yellowstone Park. And of course it would be so much more pleasant if she and Bob just went alone, to give her a vacation from the children. Lovely! How I would have liked a motor trip like that myself, with or without children—and a vacation from my lifetime of service to my family!

But Cora just naturally took it for granted that she could bring her two children and leave them with Mother and me—which meant that I would have them to take care of. Of course, I have nothing against Cora. She is my sister, and all that. She is neither a bad sort, nor an angel—just an average sister. But apparently I had spoiled her. And it was the cool way that she just assumed that she could continue to impose upon me with an extra load, that irritated me. I was just in the mood not to like it. I could not see any reason why she could not take her own children along with her on that trip. It would do them good.

But Mother spoke up at once and said that of course we would be glad to have the children. And then, without thinking, I spoke right up, quickly.

"I don't know. I may have some other plans."

It was a bomb-shell. Cora turned on me and stared, with the air of a school-teacher reproving a naughty child.

"What's that? What do you mean—you've got plans?" As if, how did I dare to be anything but a family drudge? Anyway, that was how it seemed to me then. And it was this challenging attitude upon her part that made me now really determined. And so I plunged into it.

"Well—Jim and I have been planning to get married!"

Good night! Silence and consternation!

"Why, Georgia!" said Florence, in that tone of reproach. They all looked reproachful, as if how could I think of doing such a thing. I will say that Mother took it the best of the lot.

GOOD heavens!" said Cora. "What are you going to do about Mother?" And she irritated me still further by the way she said it.

"What am I going to do about Mother?" I said, emphasizing the "I". And then I went on. "It doesn't seem to me that that's quite the way to put it. What are you going to do about Mother? What are we all going to do about Mother? She is your mother, too. It isn't altogether a matter of what I am going to do."

"Well!" said Cora, in disgust.

"Well, I must say!" said Florence.

"Of all things!" said Hattie.

"But how can you get married?" said Cora again.

"Why, just the same as you did, all of you, so far as I can see," I said. "Why

do you assume that it was all right for you to get married but wrong for me to do so?"

"Oh, we never said it was *wrong*," said Florence, with a queer inflection on the word, as if to imply that if it was not actually wrong there was something else to prevent it. You know how one gets these unspoken meanings.

But Mother saw the point first of all. And she spoke up. "Georgia is quite right, girls. If Georgia wants to get married—"

"Well, but—" said Hattie.

AND since everybody was interrupting, I did so, too. "As for Cora's trip," I said, "why didn't it occur to her, if she wants to leave the children, that Florence has much more room now than I have, and a lot more time on her hands?"

"Oh, of course I'll take the children if you don't want them," said Florence.

"And if you're going to blow up everything and go off and get married," said Cora, rather sarcastically. I interrupted.

"Now, just listen, you—" I said. "From the time that you were babies I have washed you and dressed you and waited upon you, and made myself the family servant, haven't I? And now you just take it for granted that I must go on being a good old slave, and that you can get married, and that I cannot."

"Oh, no, no," said Florence.

"Oh, yes, yes," I said. "I know how things stand, and I'm just about tired of being the family goat. I've got a life of my own."

And just about this time Mother, who was all excited, began to choke and everybody rushed to her. But they all looked at me reproachfully, as if I had been responsible. In a minute Mother was all right, and then she herself brought us back to the subject.

"Georgia is right," said Mother. "Georgia's always been a good girl, and the best girl I've got. I'm sure that I don't want to stand in her way." And she put out her hand to me. Then I went to her and kissed her, and began to cry and she petted me. And then I cried harder. At least my mother loved me, very dearly, and that made everything all right; repaid me for everything I had ever done for her. And I realized that in my recent bitterness I had not been quite fair to her. She wanted my happiness, and I cried all the harder. I heard Florence say that there was no need for taking on like that, but Mother promptly shushed her.

After a while I stopped crying, and I guess by that time the girls had come to their senses, and realized just what my

life had been. For then they began to tell me about how it was all right with them, my getting married, and that it was too bad if I misunderstood them. Florence said that she had a room that Mother could have, and that she had planned this room for Mother, anyway; that she would be glad to have her make that her home permanently. And Cora said that after all she thought she had better take the two youngsters along with her on the trip, for she would only worry about them if she left them behind. And so the sky was clearing up, and my heart began to be happy once more. The bitterness was all gone, and I found that I loved my sisters, too.

Well, about that time Jim came in, having forgotten that the bunch would be there. He paused at the door, a little bit shy. But they misunderstood his shyness.

"Well, Mister Jim," said Cora, "we congratulate you." He stood there puzzled and wondering.

"Hello, Brother Jim," said Florence. "Georgia has spilled the beans; told us all about it."

Then he looked at me with a puzzled, questioning look. I smiled at him and nodded my head.

"Yes," I said. "I told them just now."

But still he was hardly able to believe it. "When is it going to be?" asked Hattie, and she went up to him, to shake hands, and kissed him. Then Florence and Cora did the same, and he flushed as red as a beet.

"Who is going to be best man?"

"Look how shy he is!"

BUT he was looking at me again. "It's all right, Jim; I told them," I said. Then I went up to him and put my arms around his neck and kissed him, with them all looking on. And they all laughed. And then I began to laugh, as I hung on to him, and I laughed until I began to cry. Then he put his arms around me and picked me up, carrying me out of the room. He said afterward that he was so surprised and happy he didn't know what to do.

Of course it has worked out all right. It always does, I suppose, when two people are intended for each other. Mother only said that she was very happy on my account, though I think she hated to make the change.

Jim found a nice little place for us, with a nice downstairs room where his mother could have plenty of privacy, if she wanted it, which meant of course that we could have plenty of privacy, too.

Anyway, I'm not the door-mat any longer.

Miss D. L.,
Hampton, N. J.

BISHOP, while visiting, happened upon a homestead where fresh eggs were plentiful. He bought several dozen.

When boarding the train for home, he handed his satchel to the porter, saying, "Be careful with that; it contains breakables."

The porter gave the bishop an appraising glance from head to toe, and remarked soberly, "Boss, you sho' don't look lak that sort of a man."

J. M. D.,
Gentry, Ark.

IT WAS in the wee small hours of the night. A festive man came staggering home. After fumbling at the door for a while, he was greeted by his wife:

"And I thought you were going to hear a lecture on temperance."

"So it seems, m'dear," he replied.

Miss I. L.,
Newark, N. J.

AN OLD man entered a drug store and asked the clerk if he could recommend something for killing moths.

"Try moth balls," said the druggist. "Oh, they're no good. I bought some last week and I couldn't hit one of the blame things."

* * * * *

J. H. T.,
Richmond, Va.

THIS happened in Georgia. One day an old darkey came into the village store. The storekeeper had not seen him for some time, so he said, "Uncle Jack, how have you been getting along?"

"Poly, mighty poly," answered Uncle Jack. "I tells you, Massa Lee, it's been a hard year on us niggers. I tells you, Massa, if things don't git better quick, I'se gwine back to preachin' for a livin'." I'se done it three times befo', and I ain't too stuck up to do it ag'in."

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Three's a Crowd

[Continued from page 41]

to me whether he comes along or not," I said, a little sarcastically, "only I thought that since he is so closely attached to you he would want to come. Of course, if he doesn't want to—"

Just then the doorbell rang. Sure enough, it was he. He was as cool and confident as ever.

"Well, well," he said, as he saw me, "you are home for a change, eh, Will, and we shall have the pleasure of your company."

"Sure," I said. "You are both going with me to the Follies to-night."

The two of them looked at each other. There was defiance in her manner. Same spunky Alice. Same wilful Roy. And I suppose they were thinking about me, "Same pig-headed Will!" It was what the French call an "impasse."

Roy was diplomatic. "But Mrs. Larkin said that she wanted to see the Russian dancers." And he said it as if that settled it.

"That's all right," I said. "When she said that, she didn't know that I was going to take her to the Follies."

"But I want to see the Russians," Alice spoke up. "And besides, you are forgetting Mr. Reynolds. It's an engagement. You see, you are outvoted, Will."

Well, you know how a man feels in a deadlock like that, especially a man of my type. The stronger the resistance, the more the determination to fight it out to a finish.

"That makes no difference to me," I said. "To-night, just for a change, we are all going to the Follies."

"But it does make a difference," put in Roy, very coolly and decidedly. "Not to me, of course, but you can't take Mrs. Larkin off to the Follies when she wants to see the Russians. It just isn't done, that's all."

"Oh, is that so?" I sneered. "Well, it is being done to-night."

OF course by this time, just because of my attitude, Alice was determined that the Follies would be the very last place in the world that she would go, dead or alive. But on my side I was determined that the Follies was the one and only place where we would go. My need of relaxation was now forgotten. It was a matter of pride. Well, call it vanity, if you like. Anyway, I could not back down now. You know how it is.

"I am certainly not going to the Follies," said Alice, "and I can't understand your rudeness."

"Listen," I said. "If you want to choose between where I want to take you and where he wants to take you, you can do that from to-morrow on for the rest of your life. If you want him you can have him. But to-night, by the Lord Harry, you are going with me to the Follies, even if I have to drag you there by the hair of your head."

"Will, you are making a fool of yourself," said Alice.

"That's my privilege," I said.

"You can at least be a gentleman," she retorted.

"Cut out the rough stuff, Bill," said Roy. "You're not yourself. All this won't get you anywhere at all, with me."

"Oh, is that so?" I said, fighting mad. "Well, all I've got to say to you is that you've got your nerve to come into my home and try to turn my wife against me when I propose to take her out with me."

"Wait a minute, now; let's be fair about this," he said. "You're not putting that straight. I have nothing to say about it. It's all up to her. Your wife doesn't want

to go to the Follies, and so of course you're not going to drag her there by the hair of her head, or in any other way."

"Who says I'm not?" Of course I meant that as a challenge.

"Well," he said, very cool, and that irritated me all the more--his manner, "it is through no choice of mine that I would ever be dragged into a situation like this. But since I happen to be here--" and he shrugged his shoulders.

There was only one thing that I could do, now. Well, there was only one thing that I wanted to do, and that was to fight. I wanted to kill him. We had only taken this house a short time before, and I had planned a billiard room upstairs. The billiard table had not yet arrived, and so the room was empty.

"Listen, you," I said. "I'd like nothing better than to take you up into the billiard room and lock the door and find out whether I am going to take her to the Follies or you are going to take her to the Russians. Right now!"

SUITS me," he said. Then he suddenly threw off his cool manner, hurled his hat and gloves into a chair and jerked off his coat. Then he threw his arms up in the air and stretched, and got up on his toes. "Will, you're insane," screamed Alice. "Why, you can't do such a thing."

"Who says I can't?" I fairly barked at her. All my jealousy, all my anger, all my resentment toward her for having brought about this thing, boiled up in me. I started up the stairs. Alice stared after me. Then she turned to him. I thought she wanted to save him.

"Don't, for Heaven's sake, don't," she pleaded.

"Better not," I taunted him from the top of the stairs. "It wouldn't be good for those pretty piano fingers."

He ignored me and turned to her with a shrug of the shoulders. "What can I do?" And then he added, almost consolingly, "Don't you worry!"

Imagine that. Why should he expect my wife to worry about what happened to him? But it maddened me all the more. Heavens! There is no such agony as that of a man in the frame of mind I was in. I didn't care if I got killed. But also, I wanted to kill. But not with a weapon. I wanted to do it with my own hands.

I stepped into the room, he after me. I shut the door and locked it. Then I reached up and put the key on top of the sash, over the door. One of us would still have to be able-bodied to get it down to open the door. I pointed to it with a wave of my hand, meaning that the victor would have it. He understood and nodded. He was still cool, but as determined as I. However, he made one more effort to avoid the trouble.

"Don't be a fool, Bill. I'm a good boxer."

"You'll need to be, blankety blank you!" I swore, and I swung at him. My very fury made me wild, and he could have liked nothing better. I might as well have swung at an airplane high over my head.

If you know anything about boxing, then you know what I still had to learn at that time--namely, that a skillful boxer can make a mere plaything out of a man without boxing experience. Strength counts for nothing against skill, and at that Reynolds must have been in far better condition than I. The more furiously I fought, the more he seemed to have me at his mercy.

And what he didn't do to me! I made gigantic lunges, such as would have knocked his head off, as it seemed to me, if

they had landed, but he either ducked them, stepped out of reach or stepped in so close that I simply swung around him. And when he did that he would give me a jolt in the side that would make me numb. Several times he knocked me down, but I would jump up and go at him with more violence than ever. Once he caught me a wicked one, just above the stomach, and for a few seconds I could not breathe, either in or out. I went down in a heap, with the feeling of a man who is dying, for both my heart and lungs were paralyzed. Oh, what a desperate sensation! For a moment it took all the fight out of me, and meanwhile he just stood off and looked at me, like a scientist studying a bug or a chemical reaction in a test tube. He just waited until I got my breath back, to my surprise, and with it came my fighting spirit. As I stumbled to my feet he stepped forward for more action. He did not swing as I did, but somehow he landed quick, jolting blows, and half the time I did not know where they came from. One of them broke my nose. Another closed my left eye. Another opened the skin over my other eye, and the blood streamed down my face, almost blinding me.

And now I was feeling tired, that is, my hands felt heavy and it was hard to hold them up. I was still furious, but I was slow, and I could hardly understand why. And in this short time I had already learned how to pause a moment, to get my breath and wait for a little strength to come back to me. I knew I was badly whipped, but I had to fight on. If once I could hit him, just right—one terrific blow! It was a desperate chance, but I kept hoping against hope.

ALL this time, however, I could hear Alice out in the hall, pounding on the door with her little hands, screaming at us to stop and open the door. Alice, I am sure, was more frantic and excited than either of us, though of course she could not know how the fight was turning out. I remember the thought passing through my mind that she certainly did not need to worry about him! It bothered me, her pounding and screaming at the door, and I thought it hampered my fighting, and I wished that she would stop. But I fought on, with my waning strength.

Once I turned my head, slowly and stupidly in my fatigue, just as Alice screamed more desperately. And just then he gave me another of those fearful jolts just above the stomach. He did not hit hard, but just the right way, and again there was that deadly paralysis; again my heart seemed to have stopped beating and I could not breathe. It was the very agony of death. Yet, I was still on my feet. But this time he did not stand off and watch me. He stepped up and gave me a smart rap on the jaw, there was a flash, like a bursting bomb, and I found myself lying on the floor, feeling miserably sick and looking up at him.

"Have you had enough?" he asked coolly. And there was not a mark on him!

Even then, I wanted to get up and at him, but I could not raise my head. I was even unable to speak. He reached down and wiped my one good eye with his handkerchief. But apparently Alice, outside the door, had sensed that the fight was over, and when he asked me that question her clamoring was renewed, furiously. Reynolds took another look at me, looked up at the top of the door very coolly, reached for the key, and unlocked the door.

Alice fairly burst into the room, as he stepped back. With her first glance she saw me prostrated. Roy gave her a friendly, reassuring look, as much as to say, "You see, there was nothing to worry about." But he had miscalculated. Her eyes flashed the lightning of her hate as



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she looked a him. And that look of hers!
"You beast!" she cried. And the next
moment, to my amazement, she was down
on the floor at my side, gently picking
up my bruised and battered head.

"Get me some cold water and some clean
towels," she said to him, imperiously, as
he stood in the doorway. Then, gently
and tenderly, she lifted my aching, swollen
head upon her lap, edging around to make
me more comfortable.

"The beast, the beast!" she was mutter-
ing, wiping my face with her handkerchief
until he brought her a glass of water, some
towels, and a bottle of witch hazel.

"Now get out!" she commanded, with
her eyes flashing again. They had often
flashed like that at me, but I rather liked
to see it this time.

And then, as I felt the sympathetic
touch of her hands upon my face, as she
carefully sponged off my raw and bleeding
features, I had a strange sense of peace.
It was curious. Here was I, not enjoying
the fruit of victory, but, on the contrary,
miserably defeated and badly beaten—yet
happy. And at peace. Here I had the
sorest head, physically speaking, that any
man ever had, and yet my soreheadedness,
spiritually speaking, had entirely vanished.
All my resentment, all my jealousy, had
been dissipated as completely as if there
had never been any. And Alice, proud,
high-strung Alice was in tears, and—now
that I was weak and broken—loved me as
she had never loved me before.

In the most cheerful frame of mind that
I had known for days, I soon found my-
self able to get up on my feet, with her
help, and carry my throbbing head into
the bedroom, where she made me lie down.
She said she would get some antiseptics,
but I heard her at the telephone asking
for the doctor. And just then in the mir-
ror, from my place on the bed, I had the
pleasure of seeing my sadly altered map.
Was that really me? With my nose all
crooked? I started to laugh, but that hurt
too much, and I had to chuckle inwardly.
I stared at my face in curiosity, as if I
were someone else. A moment later Alice
came in to comfort me.

WHAT that doctor did in manipulating
and straightening out my broken nose,
tender as it now was, and in plugging it up
inside and strapping it on the outside to
keep it straight, hurt a great deal more
than the original breaking of it. That
made me realize what a rough time I had
had. Believe me, I would not so much
mind going through the fight again if I
once got into the right temper for it, but
far be it from me to go through another
siege like that with the doctor. Oh, that
sensitive and exquisitely painful face, when
it came to patching it up.

I told the doctor that I had made a fool
of myself. But didn't I want to prosecute
the man? No, I said; it was all my own
fault. And then I told him of the curious
feeling of being at peace after my bruising,
the calm after the storm. He said he under-
stood that; it was quite natural. I can
remember his exact words, and his odd
smile.

"It was in the nature of a catharsis,"
said the Doc. "That is, I mean, in a
nervous sense, or rather, in the Greek
sense, as Aristotle used the word. You
see, the whole thing was a sort of nerve
explosion, and of course that brought re-
lease, or relief, of—or—whatever was sup-
pressed or bottled-up in you—"

"I know what it was," I said, and I
started to laugh until I found that I
couldn't. "It was my plain damned cussed-
ness. It was bottled-up fury let loose.
Nerve explosion is right. Something blew
up. But it's released now, whatever it
was."

Anyway, I was happy on another count.
For the affair had demonstrated where I
stood with my wife. You're right, we did
not go to the Follies, that night. Also, we
did not go to see the Russians. However,
a couple of days later I received a
courteous note of apology and regret from
Roy, in which he tried to say how sorry
he was, from every standpoint. He said
also that he was leaving town and would
have to say good-by through this letter.

"He is leaving on my account," said
Alice.

"Not on my account?" I asked, trying to
be funny.

"Well, on your account, with relation to
me," said Alice.

ROY is, after all, a gentleman," I
ventured.

"He is a brute."

"Oh, I would have been the brute, if I
had been more capable," I reflected. "I de-
served what I got. And the doctor was
right; it did me good."

"No, no," she protested, and she started
to put her arms around my patched-up
head, but stopped and patted my hand in-
stead.

"At least my hands are all right. Oh,
but how about his—and his piano work."

"Oh, what do we care?" said Alice.

Well, that was final. Now I knew how
foolish it was of me ever to be jealous.
At last, also, I began to know my own
wife.

I cannot say that we even now get along
in perfect peace. No two such persons as
Alice and myself will ever avoid a certain
amount of clashing. But that affair with
Roy—my affair with him, not hers—
brought us to a basic understanding. And
that has been worth more than it cost.
After all, my face is now such that my
friends recognize me again. I told them
I had been in a motor accident, and they
said that I looked it.

I might say that Alice has helped to
work out the solution of our problem in a
very practical way, by following up a
professional career as a violinist. She
"lives her own life," to quote her own way
of putting it. You know, it is really much
better that way. Part of the time she is
out on concert tours with a quartet that she
plays in, and then I miss her, and then
we both make more allowances for each
other when we are together.

Oh, but wait. I must tell you what
happened about the time that the doctor
finally took the straps off my nose and the
plugs out of the inside of it, and my
face looked almost fit to show in public
again. It may seem trivial to you, but I
may confess that I got a big kick out of it.
And, by the way, its a revelation in femi-
nine psychology, following my failure to
have my own way by my former master-
ful, dominating spirit. Anyway, I want
you to get this:

"Don't you think you're feeling well
enough to go out somewhere now?" asked
Alice, looking me over carefully.

"Well, now, I think I do," I said.

"What's on your mind, Alice?"

"Oh, I was thinking, maybe you would
like to go and see the Follies?"

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is made in popular coat effect,
neatly trimmed with braid and
buttons, and has 2 pockets and
popular Peter Pan Collar.

Neat, dressy styles, suitable
for street and house wear, and
for all ages and figures. A sea-
son's supply of dresses for a-
bout the regular price of one.
Sizes 32 to 53 bust. Also Mis-
ses 14 to 20 years.

SEND NO MONEY

just send post card or a letter
NOW! When dresses are deliv-
ered pay mailman only \$2.88 and
Postage. If not satisfied, we
will return your money.

NORMAN ROBERTS & CO.
Dept. 7H120, 1428 N. Wells St., CHICAGO

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Send me the three dresses you advertised for \$2.88 (for
all three). When the package arrives, I will pay the mail-
man the special bargain price of \$2.88 and few cents post-
age. (If you send cash with order, we will pay the post-
age—send cash especially if you may be out when mail-
man calls). It is understood that if I am not satisfied you
will return my money.

SIZE.....

Name.....

Postoffice..... State.....

Street of
R. F. D. No..... Box No.....

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